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George Bancroft.

THE

WORKS

OF

PRESIDENT EDWARDS,

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOLUME VII.

CONTAINING

FIFTEEN SERMONS ON VARIOUS IMPORTANT SUBJECTS, DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL.

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.

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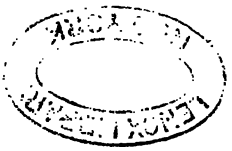

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PREFACE OF THE EDITOR.

As the two following volumes consist wholly of sermons, it may be proper to introduce them with a few prefatory remarks.

It was the original design of the Editor, *as stated in the* Proposals, *to bring into this collection of President* Edwards's *Works, every thing which had come before the public from his pen. It was beside his hope, to be able to add something from his manuscripts which had never before been published. All this, it was thought, might be comprised within the limits of eight octavo volumes, of five hundred pages or upwards each. This calculation was not founded upon a minute estimate, nor had it the sanction of experience. It was general; and appears, as we have progressed in the work, to be inadequate. It would require at least another volume to fulfil the original design; notwithstanding the type is smaller than that which at first it was proposed to use. For this error in estimate, the* Editor *is willing as much blame should attach to him as it deserves. At the same time he is consoled with the reflection, that, as no injury was designed, none actually accrues, to his subscribers. The volumes, as they are given, are really worth more, by considerable, than the* Proposals *warranted them to expect.*

As the times were uncommonly difficult, and the subscription so small as scarcely to justify a proceeding with the work, it was thought, on the whole, not advisable to add another volume. This judgment met the entire acquiescence of several respectable gentlemen, particularly friendly to Mr. Edwards's *Writings, who were consulted on the subject. If however the subscribers are desirous to have the work go to the complete extent, at first in-*

tended, and, for the sake of it, are willing to be at an expense proportionate to that at which the eight volumes come to them; and will signify it, a supplementary volume shall be added.

Except the Sermon delivered at Newhaven 1741, *upon the distinguishing marks of a work of the* Spirit of God; 1 John iv. 1, *the leading thoughts of which, more maturely digested and with fuller illustrations, are brought into view in the piece which* Mr. EDWARDS *afterwards published, and which the reader has had before him in the third volume, entitled,* Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in Newengland; *nothing is omitted but what is posthumous, and never had the finishing hand of the author. And, if comparison is to be indulged among works so generally excellent, that which is omitted, either because the subject had been already discussed in some form before, or because in some respect more imperfect than it could have gone from the hand of the author, if it had by him been prepared for the press, has probably the least claim to an honorable preservation.*

The Sermons which are put into these two volumes may be considered as a liberal selection. They give a fair specimen of Mr. EDWARDS's *talents and manner, as a composer of sermons. In them we are not to look for brilliancy of conception or polished periods. That splendid eloquence, without which the fastidiousness of modern taste is scarce ever satisfied, was altogether beneath* Mr. EDWARDS's *care. He had too high a sense of the worth of simple, unadorned truth, to think he could have any valuable recommendations from dress. He preached to a plain auditory, and his principal aim was to be understood. He wished to reach the consciences and hearts of his hearers; not to play with their imaginations. The Sermons have therefore a particular character, and we venture to say the best character. Embellishment, sparingly bestowed, might heighten, but could not materially add to their value. They correspond with the simple, unadorned manner of Him, who spake as never man spake. They exhibit a mind singularly spiritual and heavenly; so deeply conversant with objects of faith as almost to forget it had any temporal concerns. They are grave and solemn. They descend to particulars, and survey the whole ground of duty and of guilt. They pursue the sinner into all his lurking places, and lay before*

him the only foundation on which his hope can warrantably rest. While the most popular modern sermons entirely fail of the proper object of Gospel preaching, these most successfully obtain it. The reader is compelled to think ; and e feels evidence. Obligation arrests him, with a sensibility of which he was never conscious before, and he realizes, with astonishment at his past stupidity, the awful and everlasting scenes which await him. Fearfulness surprizes the hypocrite, and the sincere Christian only is comforted.

The Sermons are not divided as they were in the preaching of them, and as they have appeared in former publications. It was thought best to put all those together which were drawn from one text, so that they may stand in the form of a single continued discourse. If the reader wishes to make a pause, he will meet with no difficulty in finding the proper place for it.

The doctrine of justification by faith alone is handled, in the first sermon, with the care and ingenuity which mark all the writings of this great divine. Yet he was not infallible. And the statement which he gives of this doctrine, though in the main certainly correct, should not be received in every part of it with implicit credit. It deserves to be considered carefully whether the believer, besides receiving the complete remission of his sins, can be a subject imputatively of such an obedience to the law as exactly meets its demands, and as entitles him in justice to glory. It is a serious question whether such obedience and forgiveness are reconcileable, as meeting in the same person. The views which the author sometimes gives of the propriety and necessity of the sinner's strivings, while impenitent, to obtain converting grace, are probably to be admitted also with some diffidence.

WORCESTER, MARCH, 1809.

SERMONS

ON

VARIOUS

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

SERMONS

ON VARIOUS

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

SERMON I.

Justification by Faith alone.

ROMANS IV. 5.

BUT TO HIM THAT WORKETH NOT, BUT BELIEVETH ON HIM THAT JUSTIFIETH THE UNGODLY, HIS FAITH IS COUNTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

THE following things may be noted in this verse: 1. That justification respects a man as ungodly: This is evident by those words.....*that justifieth the ungodly:* Which words cannot imply less, than that God, in the act of justification has no regard to any thing in the person justified, as godliness, or any goodness in him; but that nextly or immediately before this act, God beholds him only as an ungodly or wicked creature; so that godliness in the person to be justified is not so antecedent to his justification as to be the ground of it. When it is said that God justifies the ungodly, it is as absurd to suppose that our godliness, taken as some goodness in us, is the ground of our justification, as when it is said that Christ gave sight to the blind, to suppose that sight was prior

to, and the ground of that act of mercy in Christ; or as, if it should be said, that such an one by his bounty has made a poor man rich, to suppose that it was the wealth of this poor man that was the ground of this bounty towards him, and was the price by which it was procured.

2. It appears that *by him that worketh not*, in this verse, is not meant only one that does not conform to the ceremonial law, because *he that worketh not*, and *the ungodly*, are evidently synonymous expressions, or what signify the same; it appears by the manner of their connexion: If it be not so, to what purpose is the latter expression, *the ungodly*, brought in? The context gives no other occasion for it, but only to show, that the grace of the gospel appears, in that God, in justification, has no regard to any godliness of ours. The foregoing verse is, "Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." In that verse it is evident that gospel grace, consists in the reward's being given *without works*; and in this verse which immediately follows it, and in sense is connected with it, it is evident that gospel grace consists in a man's being justified that is *ungodly*; by which it is most plain, that by *him that worketh not*, and him that is *ungodly*, are meant the same thing; and that therefore not only works of the ceremonial law are excluded in this business of justification, but works of morality and godliness.

3. It is evident in the words, that by that faith, that is here spoken of, by which we are justified, is not meant the same thing as a course of obedience or righteousness, by the expression by which this faith is here denoted, *viz. believing on him that justifies the ungodly*. They that oppose the Solifidians, as they call them, do greatly insist on it, that we should take the words of scripture concerning this doctrine in their most natural and obvious meaning; and how do they cry out, of our clouding this doctrine with obscure metaphors, and unintelligible figures of speech? But is this to interpret scripture according to its most obvious meaning, when the scripture speaks of our *believing on him that justifies the ungodly*, or the *breakers of his law*, to say, that the meaning of it is performing a course of obedience to his law, and avoiding the breaches of

it? Believing on God as a *justifier*, certainly is a different thing from submitting to God as a *lawgiver*; especially a believing on him as a justifier of the ungodly or rebels *against the lawgiver*.

4. It is evident that the subject of justification is looked upon as destitute of any righteousness in himself, by that expression, *it is counted or imputed to him for righteousness*. The phrase, as the apostle uses it here, and in the context, manifestly imports, that God, of his sovereign grace, is pleased, in his dealings with the sinner, to take and regard that which indeed is not righteousness, and in one that has no righteousness, so, that the consequence shall be the same as if he had righteousness; (which may be from the respect that it bears to some thing that is indeed righteous.) It is plain that this is the force of the expression in the preceding verses. In the last verse but one, it is manifest that the apostle lays the stress of his argument for the free grace of God, from that text that he cites out of the Old Testament about Abraham, on that word *counted*, or *imputed*, and that this is the thing that he supposed God to shew his grace in, viz. in his *counting* something for righteousness, in his consequential dealings with Abraham, that was no righteousness in itself. And in the next verse which immediately precedes the text, "Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt," the word there translated *reckoned*, is the same that in the other verses is rendered *imputed*, and *counted*; and it is as much as if the apostle had said, "As to *him that works* there is no need of any gracious *reckoning* or *counting* it for righteousness, and causing the reward to follow as if it were a righteousness; for if he has works, he has that which is a righteousness in itself, to which the reward properly belongs." This is further evident by the words that follow, verse 6. "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works." What can here be meant by imputing righteousness without works; but imputing righteousness to him that has none of his own? Verse 7, 8. "Saying, blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and

whose sins are covered: Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." How are these words of the apostle's purpose? Or how do they prove any such as that righteousness is imputed without works, unless because the word *imputed* is used, and the subject of the tation is mentioned as a sinner, and consequently destitute moral righteousness? For David says no such thing, as is forgiven without the works of the ceremonial law; t no hint of the ceremonial law, or reference to it, in the I will therefore venture to infer this *doctrine* from the for the subject of my present discourses, viz.

DOCTRINE.

WE ARE JUSTIFIED ONLY BY FAITH IN CHRIST, AN BY ANY MANNER OF VIRTUE OR GOODNESS OF OU

Such an assertion as this, I am sensible, many w ready to cry out of as absurd, betraying a great deal o rance, and containing much inconsistence; but I desir one's patience till I have done.

In handling this doctrine, I would,

1. Explain the *meaning* of it, and shew how I wo understood by such an assertion.
2. Proceed to the consideration of the evidence *truth* of it.
3. Shew how evangelical obedience is concerned affair.
4. Answer objections.
5. Consider the importance of the doctrine.

I. I would explain the meaning of the doctrine, o in what sense I assert it, and would endeavor to evin truth of it: Which may be done in answer to these t quiries, viz. I. What is meant by being justified? W meant when it is said, that this is by faith alone, witho manner of virtue or goodness "of our own?"

First, I would shew what justification is, or what I suppose is meant in scripture by being justified. And here I would not at all enlarge; and therefore to answer in short:

A person is said to be justified, when he is approved of God as free from the guilt of sin and its deserved punishment; and as having that righteousness belonging to him that entitles to the reward of life. That we should take the word in such a sense and understand it as the judge's accepting a person as having both a negative and positive righteousness belonging to him, and looking on him therefore as not only quit or free from any obligation to punishment, but also as just and righteous, and so entitled to a positive reward, is not only most agreeable to the etymology and natural import of the word, which signifies to make righteous, or to pass one for righteous in judgment, but also manifestly agreeable to the force of the word as used in scripture.

Some suppose that nothing more is intended in scripture by justification, than barely the remission of sins. If it be so it is very strange, if we consider the nature of the case; for it is most evident and none will deny, that it is with respect to the rule or law of God that we are under, that we are said in scripture to be either justified or condemned. Now what is it to justify a person as the subject of a law or rule, but to judge him or look upon him, and approve him as standing right with respect to that rule? To justify a person in a particular case, is to approve him as standing right, as subject to the law or rule in that case; and to justify in general is to pass him in judgment, as standing right in a state correspondent to the law or rule in general: But certainly in order to a person's being looked on as standing right with respect to the rule in general, or in a state corresponding with the law of God more is needful than what is negative, or a not having the guilt of sin; for whatever that law is, whether a new one or an old one, yet doubtless something positive is needed in order to its being answered. We are no more justified by the voice of the law, or of him that judges according to it, by a mere pardon of sin, than Adam, our first surety, was justified by the law, at the first point of his existence, before he had done the work,

or fulfilled the obedience of the law, or had so much as any trial whether he would fulfil it or no. If Adam had finished his course of perfect obedience, he would have been justified: and certainly his justification would have implied something more than what is merely negative; he would have been approved as having fulfilled the righteousness of the law, and accordingly would have been adjudged to the reward of it. So Christ, our second surety (in whose justification all who believe in him, and whose surety he is, are virtually justified) was not justified till he had done the work the Father had appointed him, and kept the Father's commandments through all trials; and then in his resurrection he was justified. When he that had been put to death in the flesh was quickened by the Spirit, 1 Pet. iii. 18, then he that was manifest in the flesh was justified in the Spirit, 1 Tim. iii. 16. But God, when he justified him in raising him from the dead, did not only release him from his humiliation for sin, and acquit him from any further suffering or abasement for it, but admitted him to that eternal and immortal life, and to the beginning of that exaltation that was the reward of what he had done. And indeed the justification of a believer is no other than his being admitted to communion in, or participation of the justification of this head and surety of all believers; for as Christ suffered the punishment of sin, not as a private person, but as our surety; so when after this suffering he was raised from the dead, he was therein justified, not as a private person, but as the surety and representative of all that should believe in him; so that he was raised again, not only for his own, but also for our justification, according to the apostle, Rom. iv. 25. "Who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." And therefore it is that the apostle says, as he does in Rom. viii. 34. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again."

But that a believer's justification implies, not only remission of sins, or acquittance from the wrath due to it, but also an admittance to a title to that glory that is the reward of righteousness, is more directly taught in the scripture, as particularly in Rom. v. 1, 2, where the apostle mentions both these as

joint benefits implied in justification: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." So remission of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified, are mentioned together as what are jointly obtained by faith in Christ, Acts xxvi. 18. "That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified through faith that is in me." Both these are without doubt implied in that passing from death to life, which Christ speaks of as the fruit of faith, and which he opposes to condemnation, John v. 24. "Verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death to life."..... I proceed now,

Secondly, To shew what is meant when it is said, that this justification is by faith only, and not by any virtue or goodness of our own.

This inquiry may be subdivided into two, viz. 1. How it is by faith. 2. How it is by faith alone, without any manner of goodness of ours.

1. How justification is by faith..... Here the great difficulty has been about the import and force of the particle *by*, or what is that influence that faith has in the affair of justification that is expressd in scripture by being justified by faith.

Here, if I may humbly express what seems evident to me, though faith be indeed the condition of justification so as nothing else is, yet this matter is not clearly and sufficiently explained by saying that faith is the condition of justification; and that because the word seems ambiguous, both in common use, and also as used in divinity: In one sense, Christ alone performs the condition of our justification and salvation; in another sense, faith is the condition of justification; in another sense other qualifications and acts are conditions of salvation and justification too. There seems to be a great deal of ambiguity in such expressions as are commonly used, (which yet we are forced to use) such as, condition of salvation, what is required in order to salvation or justification, the terms of

the covenant, and the like; and I believe they are understood in very different senses by different persons. And besides, as the word condition is very often understood in the common use of language, faith is not the only thing in us that is the condition of justification; for by the word condition as it is very often (and perhaps most commonly) used, we mean any thing that may have the place of a condition in a conditional proposition, and as such is truly connected with the consequent, especially if the proposition holds both in the affirmative and negative, as the condition is either affirmed or denied. If it be that with which, or which being supposed, a thing shall be, and without which, or it being denied, a thing shall not be, we in such a case call it a condition of that thing: But in this sense faith is not the only condition of salvation or justification; for there are many things that accompany and flow from faith, that are things with which justification shall be, and without which, it will not be, and therefore are found to be put in scripture in conditional propositions with justification and salvation, in multitudes of places; such are, love to God, and love to our brethren, forgiving men their trespasses, and many other good qualifications and acts. And there are many other things besides faith, which are directly proposed to us, to be pursued and performed by us, in order to eternal life, as those which if they are done, or obtained, we shall have eternal life, and if not done, or not obtained, we shall surely perish. And if it were so, that faith was the only condition of justification in this sense, yet I do not apprehend that to say, that faith was the condition of justification, would express the sense of that phrase of scripture, of being justified by faith. There is a difference between being justified by a thing, and that thing universally, and necessarily and inseparably attending or going with justification; for so do a great many things that we are not said to be justified by. It is not the inseparable connexion with justification that the Holy Ghost would signify (or that is naturally signified) by such a phrase, but some particular influence that faith has in the affair, or some certain dependance that that effect has on its influence.

Some that have been aware of this have supposed that the influence or dependence might well be expressed by faith's being the instrument of our justification; which has been misunderstood, and injuriously represented, and ridiculed by those that have denied the doctrine of justification by faith alone, as though they had supposed that faith was used as an instrument in the hand of God, whereby he performed and brought to pass that act of his, viz. approving and justifying the believer. Whereas it was not intended that faith was the instrument wherewith God justifies, but the instrument wherewith we receive justification; not the instrument wherewith the justifier acts in justifying, but wherewith the receiver of justification acts in accepting justification. But yet it must be owned, that this is an obscure way of speaking, and there must certainly be some impropriety in calling it an instrument, wherewith we receive or accept justification; for the very persons that thus explain the matter, speak of faith as being the reception or acceptance itself; and if so, how can it be the instrument of reception or acceptance? Certainly there is difference between the act and the instrument. And besides, by their own descriptions of faith, Christ the mediator by whom, and his righteousness by which we are justified, is more directly the object of this acceptance and justification, which is the benefit arising therefrom more indirectly; and therefore, if faith be an instrument, it is more properly the instrument by which we receive Christ, than the instrument by which we receive justification.

But I humbly conceive we have been ready to look too far to find out what that influence of faith in our justification is, or what is that dependence of this effect on faith, signified by the expression of being justified by faith, overlooking that which is most obviously pointed forth in the expression, viz. that, the case being as it is, (there being a mediator that has purchased justification) faith in this mediator is that which renders it a meet and suitable thing, in the sight of God, that the believer, rather than others, should have this purchased benefit assigned to him. There is this benefit purchased, which God sees it to be a more meet and suitable thing that it should be assigned to

some than others, because he sees them differently qualified; that qualification wherein the meetness to this benefit, as the case stands, consists, is that in us by which we are justified. If Christ had not come into the world and died, &c. to purchase justification, no qualification whatever in us could render it a meet or fit thing that we should be justified: But the case being as it now stands, viz. that Christ has actually purchased justification by his own blood for infinitely unworthy creatures, there may be some certain qualification found in some persons, that, either from the relation it bears to the mediator and his merits, or on some other account, is the thing that in the sight of God renders it a meet and condecent thing, that they should have an interest in this purchased benefit, and which if any are destitute of, it renders it an unfit and unsuitable thing that they should have it. The wisdom of God in his constitutions doubtless appears much in the fitness and beauty of them, so that those things are established to be done that are fit to be done, and that those things are connected in his constitution that are agreeable one to another: So God justifies a believer according to his revealed constitution, without doubt, because he sees something in this qualification that, as the case stands, renders it a fit thing that such should be justified; whether it be because faith is the instrument, or as it were the hand, by which he that has purchased justification is apprehended and accepted, or because it is the acceptance itself, or whatever. To be justified, is to be approved of God as a proper subject of pardon, and a right to eternal life; and therefore, when it is said that we are justified by faith, what else can be understood by it, than that faith is that by which we are rendered approvable, fitly so, and indeed, as the case stands, proper subjects of this benefit?

This is something different from faith's being the condition of justification, only so as to be inseparably connected with justification: So are many other things besides faith; and yet nothing in us but faith renders it meet that we should have justification assigned to us; as I shall presently shew how, in answer to the next inquiry, viz.

2. How this is said to be by faith alone, without any manner of virtue or goodness of our own. This may seem to some to

be attended with two difficulties, viz. how this can be said to be by faith alone, without any virtue or goodness of ours, when faith itself is a virtue, and one part of our goodness, and is not only some manner of goodness of ours, but is a very excellent qualification, and one chief part of the inherent holiness of a Christian? And if it be a part of our inherent goodness or excellency (whether it be this part or any other) that renders it a condecent or congruous thing that we should have this benefit of Christ assigned to us, what less is this than what they mean that talk of a merit of congruity? And moreover, if this part of our Christian holiness qualifies us in the sight of God, for this benefit of Christ, and renders it a fit or meet thing, in his sight, that we should have it, why should not other parts of holiness, and conformity to God, which are also very excellent, and have as much the image of Christ in them, and are no less lovely in God's eyes, qualify us as much, and have as much influence to render us meet in God's sight, for such a benefit as this? Therefore I answer,

When it is said, that we are not justified by any righteousness or goodness of our own, what is meant is, that it is not out of respect to the excellency or goodness of any qualifications or acts in us whatsoever, that God judges it meet that this benefit of Christ should be ours; and it is not in any wise, on account of any excellency or value that there is in faith, that it appears in the sight of God a meet thing, that he that believes should have this benefit of Christ assigned to him, but purely from the relation faith has to the person in whom this benefit is to be had, or as it unites to that mediator, in and by whom we are justified. Here for the greater clearness, I would particularly explain myself under several propositions.

1. It is certain that there is some union or relation that the people of Christ stand in to him, that is expressed in scripture, from time to time, by being in Christ, and is represented frequently by those metaphors of being members of Christ, or being united to him as members to the head, and branches to the stock,* and is compared to a marriage union between

* "Our Saviour compares his mystical body, that is his church, to a vine, which his Father, whom he compares to a husbandman, hath planted; I am

husband and wife. I do not now pretend to determine of what sort this union is; nor is it necessary to my present purpose to enter into any manner of dispute about it. If any are disgusted at the word *union*, as obscure and unintelligible, the word *relation* equally serves my purpose; I do not now desire to determine any more about it, than all, of all sorts, will readily allow, viz. that there is a peculiar relation between true Christians and Christ, or a certain relation between him and them, that there is not between him and others; which is signified by those metaphorical expressions in scripture, of being in Christ, being members of Christ, &c.

2. This relation or union to Christ whereby Christians are said, to be in Christ, (whatever it be) is the ground of their right to his benefits. This needs no proof; the reason of the thing, at first blush, demonstrates it: But yet it is evident also by scripture, 1 John v. 12. "He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life." 1 Cor. i. 30, "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us ....righteousness." First we must be in him, and then he will be made righteousness or justification to us. Eph. i. 6. "Who hath made us accepted in the beloved." Our being in him is the ground of our being accepted. So it is in those unions which the Holy Ghost has thought fit to compare this union to. The union of the members of the body with the head, is the

the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. To represent to us the union that is betwixt Christ and all true Christians, and the influence of grace and spiritual life, which all that are united to him do derive and receive from him, he sets it forth to us by the resemblance of a vine and branches. As there is a natural, vital union between the vine and the branches, so there is a spiritual union between Christ and true Christians; and this union is the cause of our fruitfulness in the works of obedience and a good life. There are some indeed that seem to be grafted into Christ by an outward profession of Christianity, who yet derive no influence from him, so as to bring forth fruit, because they are not vitally united to him." *Dr. Tillotson, 3d. vol. of Serm. p.* 307.

By this it appears that the vital union between Christ and true Christians, which is much more of a mystery than the relative union, and necessarily implies it, was not thought an unreasonable doctrine by one of the greatest divines on the other side of the question in hand.

ground of their partaking of the life of the head; it is the union of the branches to the stock, which is the ground of their partaking of the sap and life of the stock; it is the relation of the wife to the husband, that is the ground of her joint interest in his estate; they are looked upon, in several respects, as one in law: So there is a legal union between Christ and true Christians; so that (as all except Socinians allow) one, in some respects, is accepted for the other by the Supreme Judge.

3. And thus it is that faith is that qualification in any person that renders it meet in the sight of God that he should be looked upon as having Christ's satisfaction and righteousness belonging to him, viz. because it is that in him which, on his part, makes up this union between him and Christ. By what has been just now observed, it is a person's being, according to scripture phrase, in Christ, that is the ground of having his satisfaction and merits belonging to him, and a right to the benefits procured thereby: And the reason of it is plain; it is easy to see how a having Christ's merits and benefits belonging to us, follows from our having (if I may so speak) Christ himself belonging to us, or a being united to him; and if so, it must also be easy to see how, or in what manner, that, in a person, that on his part makes up the union between his soul and Christ, should be the thing on the account of which God looks on it meet that he should have Christ's merits and benefits, from regard to any qualification in him, in this respect, from his doing of it for him, out of respect to the value or loveliness of that qualification, or as a reward of the excellency of it.

As there is no body but what will allow that there is a peculiar relation between Christ and his true disciples, by which they are in some sense in scripture said to be one; so I suppose there is no body but what will allow, that there may be something that the true Christian does on his part, whereby he is active in coming into his relation or union, some of the soul of the Christian, that is the Christian's uniting act, or that which is done towards this union or relation (or whatever

please to call it) on the Christian's part: Now faith I sup-
e to be this act.

I do not now pretend to define justifying faith, or to deter-
ine precisely how much is contained in it, but only to deter-
ine thus much concerning it, viz. That it is that by which
he soul that before was separate and alienated from Christ,
unites itself to him, or ceases to be any longer in that state of
alienation, and comes into that forementioned union or relation
to him, or, to use the scripture phrase, that it is that by
which the soul comes to Christ, and receives him: And this
is evident by the scripture's using these very expressions to
signify faith. John vi. 35, 36, 37, 38, 39. "He that *cometh*
to me, shall never hunger; and he that *believeth* on me, shall
never thirst. But I said unto you, that ye also have seen me,
and believe not. All that the Father giveth me, shall *come* to
me; and him that *cometh* to me, I will in no wise cast out,
For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, bu
the will of him that sent me." Ver. 40. "And this is the wi
of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the son, a
believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will ra
him up at the last day." Chap. v. 38, 39, 40. "Whom
hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the scriptures, f
they are they which testify of me. And ye will not com
to me, that ye might have life." Ver. 43, 44. "I am
in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: If anothe
come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can
lieve which receive honor one of another?" Chap
"But as many as received him, to them gave he pow
come the sons of God, even to them that believe on hi
If it be said that these are obscure figures of spe
however they might be well understood of old am
that then commonly used such metaphors, yet th
cultly understood now; I allow that the expressio
Christ, and *coming* to Christ, are metaphorical
And if I should allow them to be obscure metap
much at least is certainly plain in them, viz. th
by which those that before were separated, an
from Christ, (that is to say, were not so relate

him as his people are) do cease to be any longer at such a distance, and do come into that relation and nearness; unless they are so unintelligible, that nothing at all can be understood by them.

God does not give those that believe an union with, or an interest in the Saviour, in reward for faith but only because faith is the soul's active uniting with Christ, or is itself the very act of unition, on their part. God sees it fit, that in order to an union's being established between two intelligent, active beings or persons, so as that they should be looked upon as one, there should be the mutual act of both, that each should receive the other, as actively joining themselves one to another. God, in requiring this in order to an union with Christ as one of his people, treats men as reasonable creatures, capable of act and choice; and hence sees it fit that they only that are one with Christ by their own act, should be looked upon as one in law. What is real in the union between Christ and his people, is the foundation of what is legal; that is, it is something that is really in them, and between them, uniting them, that is the ground of the suitableness of their being accounted as one by the Judge: And if there be any act or qualification in believers that is of that uniting nature, that it is meet, on that account, that the Judge should look upon them and accept them as one, no wonder that upon the account of the same act or qualification, he should accept the satisfaction and merits of the one for the other, as if it were their satisfaction and merits: It necessarily follows, or rather is implied.

And thus it is that faith justifies, or gives an interest in Christ's satisfaction and merits, and a right to the benefits procured thereby, viz. as it thus makes Christ and the believer one, in the acceptance of the Supreme Judge. It is by faith that we have a title to eternal life, because it is by faith that we have the Son of God, by whom life is. The Apostle John in these words, 1 John v. 12. "He that hath the Son, hath life," seems evidently to have respect to those words of Christ that he gives an account of in his gospel, chap. iii. 36. "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life." And in the same

places that the scripture speaks of faith as the soul's receiving or coming to Christ, it also speaks of this receiving, or coming to, or joining with Christ, as the ground of an interest in his benefits: To as many as received him, "to them gave he power" to become the sons of God. Ye will not come unto me "that ye might have life." And there is a wide difference between its being looked on suitable that Christ's satisfaction and merits should be theirs that believe, because an interest in that satisfaction and merit is but a fit reward of faith, or a suitable testimony of God's respect to the amiableness and excellency of that grace, and its only being looked on suitable that Christ's satisfaction and merits should be theirs, because Christ and they are so united, that in the eyes of the Judge they may suitably be looked upon and taken as one.

Although, on the account of faith in the believer, it is, in the sight of God, fit and congruous, both that he that believes should be looked upon as in Christ, and also as having an interest in his merits, in the way that has been now explained; yet it appears that this is very wide from a merit of congruity, or indeed any moral congruity at all to either. There is a twofold fitness to a state; I know not how to give them distinguishing names, or otherwise, than by calling the one a *moral* and the other a *natural* fitness. A person has a moral fitness for a state, when his moral excellency commends him to it, or when his being put into such a good state is but a fit or suitable testimony of regard or love to the moral excellency, or value, or amiableness of any of his qualifications or acts. A person has a natural fitness for a state, when it appears meet and condecent that he should be in such a state or circumstances, only from the natural concord or agreeableness there is between such qualifications and such circumstances; not because the qualifications are lovely or unlovely, but only because the qualifications and the circumstances are like one another, or do in their nature, suit and agree or unite one to another. And it is on this latter account only that God looks on it fit, by a natural fitness, that he whose heart sincerely unites itself to Christ as his Saviour, should be looked upon as united to that Saviour, and so having an interest in him; and

not from any moral fitness there is between the excellency of such a qualification as faith, and such a glorious blessedness as the having an interest in Christ. God's bestowing Christ and his benefits on a soul in consequence of faith, out of regard only to the natural concord there is between such a qualification of a soul, and such an union with Christ, and interest in him, makes the case very widely different from what would be, if he bestowed this from regard to any moral suitableness: For, in the former case, it is only from God's love of order that he bestows these things on the account of faith: In the latter, God doth it out of love to the grace of faith itself. God will neither look on Christ's merits as ours, nor adjudge his benefits to us, till we be in Christ; nor will he look upon us being in him, without an active union of our hearts and souls to him; because he is a wise being, and delights in order and not in confusion, and that things should be together or asunder according to their nature; and his making such a constitution is a testimony of his love of order: Whereas if it were out of regard to any moral fitness or suitableness between faith and such blessedness, it would be a testimony of his love to the act or qualification itself: The one supposes this divine constitution to be a manifestation of God's regard to the beauty of the act of faith; the other only supposes it to be a manifestation of his regard to the beauty of that order that there is in uniting those things that have a natural agreement, and congruity, and unition, the one with the other. Indeed a moral suitableness or fitness to a state includes a natural: For it is never so that if there be a moral suitableness that a person should be in such a state, there is not also a natural suitableness; but such a natural suitableness as I have described, by no means necessarily includes a moral.

This is plainly what our divines intend when they say, that faith does not justify as a work, or a righteousness, viz. that it does not justify as a part of our moral goodness or excellency, or that it does not justify as a work in the sense, that man was to have been justified by his works by the covenant of works, which was to have a title to eternal life given him of God in testimony of his pleasedness with his works, or his re-

gard to the inherent excellency and beauty of his obedience. And this is certainly what the Apostle Paul means, when he so much insists upon it, that we are not justified by works, viz. that we are not justified by them as good works, or by any goodness, value, or excellency of our works. For the proof of this I shall at present mention but one thing, (being like to have occasion to say what shall make it more abundantly manifest afterwards) and that is, the apostles, from time to time, speaking of our not being justified by works, as the thing that excludes all boasting, Eph. ii. 9, Rom. iii. 27, and chap. iv. 2. Now which way do works give occasion for boasting, but as good? What do men use to boast of, but of something they suppose good or excellent? And on what account do they boast of any thing, but for the supposed excellency that is in it?

From these things we may learn in what manner faith is the only condition of justification, and salvation: For though it be not the only condition, so as alone truly to have the place of a condition in an hypothetical proposition, in which justification and salvation are the consequent, yet it is the condition of justification in a manner peculiar to it, and so that nothing else has a parallel influence with it; because faith includes the whole act of unition to Christ as a Saviour. The entire, active uniting of the soul, or the whole of what is called coming to Christ, and receiving of him, is called faith in scripture; and however other things may be no less excellent than faith, yet it is not the nature of any other graces or virtues directly to close with Christ as a mediator, any further than they enter into the constitution of justifying faith, and do belong to its nature.

Thus I have explained my meaning in asserting it as a doctrine of the gospel, that we are justified by faith only, without any manner of goodness of our own. I now proceed in the

II. Place, to the proof of it; which I shall endeavor to produce in the following arguments.

First. Such is our case, and the state of things, that neither faith, nor any other qualification, or act or course of acts, does or can render it suitable or fit that a person should have an interest in the Saviour, and so a title to his benefits, on

account of any excellency therein, or any other way, than only as something in him may unite him to the Saviour It is not suitable that God should give fallen man an interest in Christ and his merits, as a testimony of his respect to any thing whatsoever as a loveliness in him; and that because it is not meet, till a sinner is actually justified, that any thing in him should be accepted of God, as an excellency or amiableness of his person; or that God, by any act, should in any manner or degree testify any pleasedness with him, or favor towards him, on the account of any thing inherent in him: And that for two reasons, 1. Because the nature of things will not admit of it: 2. Because an antecedent, divine constitution stands in the way of it.

1. The nature of things will not admit of it. And this appears from the infinite guilt that the sinner, till justified, is under; which arises from the infinite evil or heinousness of sin. But because this is what some deny, I would therefore first establish that point, and shew that sin is a thing that is indeed properly of infinite heinousness; and then shew the consequence, and shew that, it being so, and so the sinner under infinite guilt in God's sight, it cannot be suitable, till the sinner is actually justified, that God should by any act testify any pleasedness with, or acceptance of any thing, as any excellency or amiableness of his person, or indeed have any acceptance of him, or pleasedness with him to testify.

That the evil and demerit of sin is infinitely great, is most demonstrably evident, because what the evil or iniquity of sin consists in, is the violating of an obligation, the doing contrary to what we are obliged to do, or doing what we should not do; and therefore by how much the greater the obligation is that is violated, by so much the greater is the iniquity of the violation. But certainly our obligation to love or honor any being is great in proportion to the greatness or excellency of that being or his worthiness to be loved or honored: We are under greater obligations to love a more lovely being than a less lovely; and if a being be infinitely excellent and lovely, our obligations to love him are therein infinitely great: The matter is so plain, it seems needless to say much about it.

Some have argued strangely against the infinite evil of sin, from its being committed against an infinite object; that if so, then it may as well be argued, that there is also an infinite value or worthiness in holiness and love to God, because that also has an infinite object; whereas the argument, from parity of reason, will carry it in the reverse: The sin of the creature against God is ill deserving in proportion to the distance there is between God and the creature; the greatness of the object, and the meanness of the subject aggravates it. But it is the reverse with regard to the worthiness of respect of the creature to God; it is worthless, (and not worthy) in proportion to the meanness of the subject; so much the greater the distance between God and the creature, so much the less is the creature's respect worthy of God's notice or regard. The unworthiness of sin or opposition to God rises and is great, in proportion to the dignity of the object and inferiority of the subject; but on the contrary, the worth or value of respect rises in proportion to the value of the subject; and that for this plain reason, *viz.* that the evil of disrespect is in proportion to the obligation that lies upon the subject to the object; which obligation is most evidently increased by the excellency and superiority of the object; but on the contrary, the worthiness of respect to a being is in proportion to the obligation that lies on him who is the object, (or rather the reason he has) to regard the subject, which certainly is in proportion to the subject's value or excellency. Sin or disrespect is evil or heinous in proportion to the degree of what it denies in the object, as it were takes from it, viz. its excellency and worthiness of respect; on the contrary, respect is valuable in proportion to the value of what is given to the object in that respect, which undoubtedly (other things being equal) is great in proportion to the subject's value, or worthiness of regard; because the subject in giving his respect, can give no more than himself to the object; and therefore his gift is of greater or less value in proportion to the value of himself.

Hence, (by the way) the love, honor, and obedience of Christ towards God, has infinite value, from the excellency

and dignity of the person in whom these qualifications were inherent; and the reason why we needed a person of infinite dignity to obey for us, was because of our infinite comparative meanness, who had disobeyed, whereby our disobedience was infinitely aggravated. We needed one, the worthiness of whose obedience might be answerable to the unworthiness of our disobedience; and therefore needed one who was as great and worthy as we were unworthy.

Another objection (that perhaps may be thought hardly worth mentioning) is, that to suppose sin to be infinitely heinous, is to make all sins equally heinous; for how can any sin be more than infinitely heinous? But all that can be argued hence is, that no sin can be greater with respect to that aggravation, the worthiness of the object against whom it is committed. One sin cannot be more aggravated than another in that respect, because in this respect the aggravation of every sin is infinite; but that does not hinder but that some sins may be more heinous than others in other respects: As if we should suppose a cylinder infinitely long, it cannot be greater in that respect, viz. with respect to the length of it; but yet it may be doubled and trebled, and made a thousand fold more, by the increase of other dimensions. Of sins that are all infinitely heinous, some may be more heinous than others; as well as of divers punishments that are all infinitely dreadful calamities, or all of them infinitely exceeding all finite calamities, so that there is no finite calamity, however great, but what is infinitely less dreadful, or more eligible than any of them, yet some of them may be a thousand times more dreadful than others. A punishment may be infinitely dreadful by reason of the long duration of it; and therefore cannot be greater with respect to that aggravation of it, viz. its length of continuance, but yet may be vastly more terrible on other accounts.

Having thus, as I imagine, made it clear, that all sin is infinitely heinous, and consequently that the sinner, before he is justified, is under infinite guilt in God's sight; it now remains that I shew the consequence, or how it follows from hence, that it is not suitable that God should give the sinner

an interest in Christ's merits, and so a title to his benefits, from regard to any qualification, or act, or course of acts in him, on the account of any excellency or goodness whatsoever therein, but only as uniting to Christ; or (which fully implies it) that it is not suitable that God, by any act, should, in any manner or degree, testify any acceptance of, or pleasedness with any thing, as any virtue, or excellency, or any part of loveliness, or valuableness in his person until he is actually already interested in Christ's merits; which appears by this, that from the premises it follows, that before the sinner is already interested in Christ, and justified, it is impossible God should have any acceptance of, or pleasedness with the person of the sinner, as in any degree lovely in his sight, or indeed less the object of his displeasure and wrath. For, by the supposition, the sinner still remains infinitely guilty in the sight of God; for guilt is not removed but by pardon: But to suppose the sinner already pardoned, is to suppose him already justified; which is contrary to the supposition. But if the sinner still remains infinitely guilty in God's sight, that is the same thing as still to be beheld of God as infinitely the object of his displeasure and wrath, or infinitely hateful in his eyes; and if so, where is any room for any thing in him, to be accepted as some valuableness or acceptableness of him in God's sight, or for any act of favor of any kind towards him, or any gift whatsoever to him, in testimony of God's respect to and acceptance of something of him lovely and pleasing? If we should suppose that it could be so, that a sinner could have faith or some other grace in his heart, and yet remain separate from Christ; and it should continue still to be so, that he is not looked upon as being in Christ, or having any relation to him, it would not be meet that that true grace should be accepted of God as any loveliness of his person in the sight of God. If it should be accepted as the loveliness of the person, that would be to accept the person as in some degree lovely to God; but this cannot be consistent with his still remaining under infinite guilt, or infinite unworthiness in God's sight, which that goodness has no worthiness to balance. While God beholds the man as separate from Christ,

he must behold him as he is in himself; and so his goodness cannot be beheld by God, but as taken with his guilt and hatefulness; and as put in the scales with it; and being beheld so, his goodness is nothing; because there is a finite on the balance against an infinite, whose proportion to it is nothing. In such a case, if the man be looked on as he is in himself, the excess of the weight in one scale above another, must be looked upon as the quality of the man. These contraries being beheld together, one takes from another, as one number is subtracted from another; and the man must be looked upon in God's sight according to the remainder: For here, by the supposition, all acts of grace and favor, in not imputing the guilt as it is, are excluded, because that supposes a degree of pardon, and that supposes justification, which is contrary to what is supposed, viz. that the sinner is not already justified; and therefore things must be taken strictly as they are: and so the man is still infinitely unworthy and hateful in God's sight, as he was before without diminution, because his goodness bears no proportion to his unworthiness, and therefore when taken together is nothing.

Hence may be more clearly seen the force of that expression in the text, of believing on him that *justifieth the ungodly*; for though there is indeed something in man that is really and spiritually good, that is prior to justification, yet there is nothing that is accepted as any godliness or excellency of the person till after justification. Goodness or loveliness of the person in the acceptance of God, in any degree, is not to be considered prior but posterior in the order and method of God's proceeding in this affair. Though a respect to the natural suitableness between such a qualification, and such a state, does go before justification, yet the acceptance even of faith as any goodness or loveliness of the believer, follows justification: The goodness is on the forementioned account justly looked upon as nothing, until the man is justified: And therefore the man is respected in justification, as in himself altogether hateful. Thus the nature of things will not admit of a man's having an interest given him in the merits or benefits of a Saviour, on the account of any thing as a righteousness, *or virtue*, or excellency in him.

2. A divine constitution that is antecedent to that which establishes justification by a Saviour, (and indeed to any need of a Saviour) stands in the way of it, viz. that original constitution or law which man was put under; by which constitution or law the sinner is condemned, because he is a violator of that law; stands condemned, till he has actually an interest in the Saviour, through whom he is set at liberty from that condemnation. But to suppose that God gives a man an interest in Christ in reward for his righteousness or virtue, is inconsistent with his still remaining under condemnation till he has an interest in Christ; because it supposes, that the sinner's virtue is accepted, and he accepted for it, before he has an interest in Christ; inasmuch as an interest in Christ is given as a reward of his virtue: But the virtue must first be accepted, before it is rewarded, and the man must first be accepted for his virtue, before he is rewarded for it with so great and glorious a reward; for the very notion of a reward, is some good bestowed in testimony of respect to, and acceptance of virtue in the person rewarded. It does not consist with the honor of the majesty of the king of heaven and earth, to accept of any thing from a condemned malefactor, condemned by the justice of his own holy law, till that condemnation be removed: And then such acceptance is inconsistent with, and contradictory to such remaining condemnation; for the law condemns him that violates it to be totally rejected and cast off by God. But how can a man continue under this condemnation, i. e. continue utterly rejected and cast off by God, and yet his righteousness or virtue be accepted, and he himself accepted on the account of it, so as to have so glorious reward as an interest in Christ bestowed as a testimony of that acceptance?

I know that the answer that will be ready for this, is, that we now are not subject to that constitution that mankind were at first put under; but that God, in mercy to mankind, has abolished that rigorous constitution or law that they were under originally, and has put us under a new law, and introduced a more mild constitution; and that the constitution or law itself not remaining, there is no need of supposing that the condemnation of it remains, to stand in the way of the accept-

pace of our virtue. And indeed there is no other way of avoiding this difficulty; the condemnation of the law must stand in force against a man till he is actually interested in the Saviour, that has satisfied and answered the law, effectually to prevent any acceptance of his virtue, before, or in order to such an interest, unless the law or constitution itself be abolished. But the scheme of those modern divines by whom this is maintained, seems to contain a great deal of absurdity and selfcontradiction: They hold, that the old law given to Adam, which requires perfect obedience, is entirely repealed, and that instead of it we are put under a new law, which requires no more than imperfect, sincere obedience, in compliance with our poor, infirm, impotent circumstances since the fall, whereby we are unable to perform that perfect obedience that was required by the first law: For they strenuously maintain, that it would be unjust in God to require any thing of us that is beyond our present power and ability to perform; and yet they hold, that Christ died to satisfy for the imperfections of our obedience, that so our imperfect obedience might be accepted instead of a perfect. Now, how can these things hang together? I would ask, What law these imperfections of our obedience are a breach of? If they are a breach of no law, then they be not sins, and if they be not sins, what need of Christ's dying to satisfy for them? But if they are sins, and so the breach of some law, what law is it? They cannot be a breach of their new law, for that requires no other than imperfect obedience, or obedience with imperfections; and they cannot be a breach of the old law, for that they say is entirely abolished, and we never were under it; and we cannot break a law that we never were under. They say it would not be just in God to exact of us perfect obedience, because it would not be just in God to require more of us than we can perform in our present state, and to punish us for failing of it; and therefore, by their own scheme, the imperfections of our obedience do not deserve to be punished. What need therefore of Christ's dying to satisfy for them? What need of Christ's suffering to satisfy for that which is no fault, and in its own nature deserves no suffering? What need of Christ's dy-

ing to purchase that our imperfect obedience should be accepted, when, according to their scheme, it would be unjust in itself that any other obedience than imperfect should be required? What need of Christ's dying to make way for God's accepting such an obedience, as it would in itself be unjust in him not to accept? Is there any need of Christ's dying to persuade God not to do unjustly? If it be said, that Christ died to satisfy that law for us, that so we might not be under that law, but might be delivered from it, that so there might be room for us to be under a more mild law; still I would inquire, What need of Christ's dying that we might not be under a law that (according to their scheme) it would in itself be unjust that we should be under, because in our present state we are not able to keep it? What need of Christ's dying that we might not be under a law that it would be unjust that we should be under, whether Christ died or no?

Thus far I have argued principally from reason, and the nature of things:.....I proceed now to the

Second argument, which is, That this is a doctrine that the holy Scripture, the revelation that God has given us of his mind and will, by which alone we can ever come to know how those that have offended God can be accepted of him, and justified in his sight, is exceeding full in: Particularly the Apostle Paul is abundant in teaching, that "we are justified by "faith alone, without the works of the law." There is no one doctrine that he insists so much upon, and is so particular in, and that he handles with so much distinctness, explaining and giving reasons, and answering objections.

Here it is not denied by any, that the apostle does assert, that we are justified by faith, without the works of the law, because the words are express; but only it is said, that we take his words wrong and understand that by them that never entered into his heart, in that when he excludes the works of the law, we understand him of the whole law of God, or the rule which he has given to mankind to walk by; whereas all that he intends is the ceremonial law.

Some that oppose this doctrine indeed say, that the apostle sometimes means that it is by faith i. e. an hearty embracing the gospel, in its first act only, or without any preceding holy

life, that persons are admitted into a justified state; but, say they, it is by a persevering obedience that they are continued in a justified state; and it is by this that they are finally justified. But this is the same thing as to say, that a man, on his first embracing the gospel, is conditionally justified and pardoned: To pardon sin, is to free the sinner from the punishment of it, or from that eternal misery that is due to it; and therefore, if a person is pardoned or freed from this misery, on his first embracing the gospel, and yet not finally freed, but his actual freedom still depends on some condition yet to be performed, it is inconceivable how he can be pardoned otherwise than conditionally; that is, he is not actually pardoned, and freed from punishment, but only he has God's promise that he shall be pardoned on future conditions; God promises him, that now, if he perseveres in obedience, he shall be finally pardoned, or actually freed from hell; which is to make just nothing at all of the apostle's great doctrine of justification by faith alone: Such a conditional pardon is no pardon or justification at all, any more than all mankind have, whether they embrace the gospel or no; for they all have a promise of final justification on condition of future, sincere obedience, as much as he that embraces the gospel. But not to dispute about this, we will suppose that there may be something or other at the sinner's first embracing the gospel, that may properly be called justification or pardon, and yet that final justification, or real freedom from the punishment of sin, is still suspended on conditions hitherto unfulfilled; yet they that hold that sinners are thus justified on embracing the gospel, suppose that they are justified by this no otherwise than as this is a leading act of obedience, or at least as virtue and moral goodness in them, and therefore would be excluded by the apostle as much as any other virtue or obedience, if it be allowed that he means the moral law, when he excludes the works of the law. And therefore, if that point be yielded, that the apostle means the moral, and not the ceremonial law only, their whole scheme falls to the ground.

And because the issue of the whole argument from those texts in St. Paul's epistles depends on the determination of this point, I would be particular in the discussion of it.

Some of our opponents in this doctrine of justification, when they deny, that by the law the apostle means the moral law, or the whole rule of life which God has given to mankind, seem to choose to express themselves thus, that the apostle only intends the Mosaic dispensation. But this comes to just the same thing as if they said, that the apostle only means to exclude the works of the ceremonial law; for when they say, that it is intended only that we be not justified by the works of the Mosaic dispensation, if they mean any thing by it, it must be, that we be not justified by attending and observing what is Mosaic in that dispensation, or by what was peculiar to it, and wherein it differed from the Christian dispensation; which is the same as that which is ceremonial and positive, and not moral, in that administration. So that this is what I have to disprove, viz. that the apostle when he speaks of the works of the law in this affair, means only the works of the ceremonial law, or those observances that were peculiar to the Mosaic administration.

And here it must be noted, that nobody controverts it with them, whether the works of the ceremonial law be not included, or whether the apostle does not particularly argue against justification by circumcision, and other ceremonial observances; but all that is in question is, whether, when he denies justjustificaton by works of the law, he is to be understood of the ceremonial law only, or whether the moral law be not also implied and intended; and therefore those arguments that are brought to prove that the apostle meant the ceremonial law, are nothing to the purpose unless they prove more than that, viz. that the apostle meant those only.

What is much insisted on is, that it was the Judaising Christians' being so fond of circumcision, and other ceremonies of the law, and depending so much on them, which was the occasion of the apostle's writing as he does against justification by the works of the law. But supposing it were so, that their trusting in works of the ceremonial law were the sole occasion of the apostle's writing, (which yet there is no reason to allow, as may appear afterwards;) if their trusting in a particular work, as a work of righteousness, was all

that gave occasion to the apostle to write, how does it follow, that therefore the apostle did not upon that occasion write against trusting in all works of righteousness whatsoever? Where is the absurdity of supposing that the apostle might take occasion, from his observing some to trust in a certain work as a work of righteousness, to write to them against persons' trusting in any works of righteousness, and that it was a very proper occasion too? Yea, it would have been unavoidable for the apostle to have argued against trusting in a particular work in that quality of a work of righteousness, which quality was general, but he must therein argue against works of righteousness in general. Supposing it had been some other particular sort of works that was the occasion of the apostle's writing, as for instance, works of charity, and the apostle should hence take occasion to write to them not to trust in their works, could the apostle by that be understood of no other work besides works of charity? Would it have been absurd to understand him as writing against trusting in any work at all, because it was their trusting to a particular work that gave occasion to his writing?

Another thing that is alleged as an evidence that the apostle means the ceremonial law, when he says, we cannot be justified by the works of the law, is, that he uses that argument to prove it, viz. that this law that he speaks of was given so long after the covenant with Abraham, in Gal. iii. 17. "And this, I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul." But, say they, it was only the Mosaic administration, and not the covenant of works, that was given so long after. But the apostle's argument seems manifestly to be mistaken by them. The apostle does not speak of a law that began first to have being four hundred and thirty years after; if he did, there would be some force in their objection; but he has respect to a certain solemn transaction, well known among the Jews, by the phrase of the giving of the law, which was that great transaction at mount Sinai, that we have account of in the 19th and 20th chapters of Exodus, consisting especially in God's giving the ten commandments, which is the

moral law, with that terrible voice, which law he afterwards gave in tables of stone. This transaction, the Jews, in the apostles' time misinterpreted; they looked upon it as God's establishing that law as a rule of justification. This conceit of their's the apostle brings this invincible argument against, viz. that God would never go about to disannul his covenant with Abraham, which was plainly a covenant of grace, by a transaction with his posterity, that was so long after it, and was plainly built upon it: He would not overthrow a covenant of grace that he had long before established with Abraham, for him, and his seed, (which is often mentioned on the ground of God's making them his people) by now establishing a covenant of works with them at Mount Sinai, as the Jews and judaising Christians supposed.

But that the apostle does not mean works of the ceremonial law only, when he excludes works of the law in justification, but also of the moral law, and all works of obedience, virtue and righteousness whatsoever, may appear by the following things.

1. The apostle does not only say, that we are not justified by the works of the law, but that we are not justified by works, using a general term; as in our text, it is said, *to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth*, &c.; and in the 6th verse, "God imputeth righteousness without works;" and chap. xi. 6, "And if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace: But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." So Eph. ii. 8, 9, "For by grace are ye saved, through faith.....not of works;" by which there is no reason in the world to understand the apostle of any other than works in general, as correlates of a reward, or good works, or works of virtue and righteousness. When the apostle says, we are justified or saved not by works, without any such term annexed, as the law, or any other addition, to limit the expression, what warrant has any one to confine it to works of a particular law or institution, excluding others? Are not observances of other divine laws, works, as well as of that? It seems to be allowed by the divines in the Arminian scheme, in their interpretation of

several of those texts where the apostle mentions works only, without any additions, that he means our own good works in general; but then, they say, he only means to exclude any proper merit in those works. But to say the apostle means one thing when he says, we be not justified by works, another when he says, we be not justified by the works of the law, when we find the expressions mixed and used in the same discourse, and when the apostle is evidently on the same argument, is very unreasonable, it is to dodge, and fly from scripture, rather than to open and yield ourselves to its teachings.

2. In the third chapter of Romans, our having been guilty of breaches of the moral law, is an argument that the apostle uses, why we cannot be justified by the works of the law; beginning with the 9th verse, there he proves, out of the Old Testament, that all are under sin: "There is none righteous, no not one: Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit: Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; and their feet swift to shed blood." And so he goes on, mentioning only those things that are breaches of the moral law; and then when he has done, his conclusion is, in the 19th and 20th verses, "Now, we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law, shall no flesh be justified in his sight." This is most evidently his argument, because all had sinned, (as it was said in the 9th verse) and been guilty of those breaches of the moral law that he had mentioned, (and it is repeated over again afterward, verse 23.) For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," therefore none at all can be justified by the law. Now if the apostle meant only, that we are not justified by the deeds of the ceremonial law, what kind of arguing would that be: Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, their feet are swift to shed blood;" therefore they cannot be justified by the deeds of the Mosaic administration: They are guilty of the breaches of the moral law; and therefore they cannot be justified by the deeds of the ceremonial law? Doubtless the apostle's argument is, that the very same law that they

have broken and sinned against, can never justify them as observers of it, because every law does not justify, but necessarily condemns its violators. And therefore our breaches of the moral law argue no more, than that we cannot be justified by that law that we have broken.

And it may be noted, that the apostle's argument here is the same that I have already used, viz. that as we are in ourselves and out of Christ, we are under the condemnation of that original law or constitution that God established with mankind; and therefore it is no way fit that any thing that we do, any virtue or obedience of ours should be accepted, or we accepted on the account of it.

3. The apostle, in the preceding part of this epistle, wherever he has the phrase, *the law*, evidently intends the moral law principally. As in the 12th verse of the foregoing chapter: "For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law." It is evidently the written, moral law the apostle means, by the next verse but one; "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law;" that is, the moral law that the Gentiles have by nature. And so the next verse, "Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts." It is the moral law, and not the ceremonial, that is written in the hearts of those that are destitute of divine revelation. And so in the 18th verse, "Thou approvest the things that are more excellent; being instructed out of the law." It is the moral law that shews us the nature of things, and teaches us what is excellent; 20th verse, "Thou hast a form of knowledge and truth in the law." It is the moral law, as is evident by what follows, ver. 22, 23. "Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law, dishonorest thou God? Adultery, idolatry, and sacrilege, surely are the breaking of the moral, and not the ceremonial law. So in the 27th verse, "And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?" i. e. The Gentiles, that you despise

because uncircumcised, if they live moral and holy lives, in obedience to the moral law, shall condemn you though circumcised. And so there is not one place in all the preceding part of the epistle, where the apostle speaks of the law, but that he most apparently intends principally the moral law; and yet when the apostle, in continuance of the same discourse, comes to tell us that we cannot be justified by the works of the law, then they will needs have it, that he means only the ceremonial law; yea, though all this discourse about the moral law, shewing how the Jews, as well as Gentiles have violated it, is evidently preparatory and introductory to that doctrine, chap. iii. 20. "That no flesh," that is none of mankind, neither Jews nor Gentiles, "can be justified by the works of the law."

4. It is evident that when the apostle says, we cannot be justified by the works of the law, he means the moral as well as ceremonial law, by his giving this reason for it, that "by the law is the knowledge of sin," as Rom. iii. 20. "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Now that law by which we come to the knowledge of sin, is the moral law chiefly and primarily. If this argument of the apostle be good, "that we cannot be justified by the deeds of the law, because it is by the law that we come to the knowledge of sin; then it proves that we cannot be justified by the deeds of the moral law, nor by the precepts of Christianity; for by them is the knowledge of sin. If the reason be good, then where the reason holds, the truth holds. It is a miserable shift, and a violent force put upon the words, to say that the meaning is, that by the law of circumcision is the knowledge of sin, because circumcision signifying the taking away of sin, puts men in mind of sin. The plain meaning of the apostle is, that as the law most strictly forbids sin, it tends to convince us of sin, and bring our own consciences to condemn us, instead of justifying us; that the use of it is to declare to us our own guilt and unworthiness, which is the reverse of justifying and approving us as virtuous or worthy. This is the apostle's meaning, if we will allow him to be his own expositor; for he himself, in this

very epistle, explains to us how it is that by the law we have the knowledge of sin, and that it is by the law's forbidding sin, chap. vii. 7. "I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet." There the apostle determines two things; first, That the way in which "by the law is the knowledge of sin," is by the law's forbidding sin: And secondly, which is more directly still to the purpose, he determines that it is the moral law by which we come to the knowledge of sin; "for," says he, "I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet." Now it is the moral, and not the ceremonial law, that says, thou shalt not covet: Therefore, when the apostle argues, that by the deeds of the law no flesh living shall be justified, because by the law is the knowledge of sin, his argument proves, (unless he was mistaken as to the force of his argument) that we cannot be justified by the deeds of the moral law.

5. It is evident that the apostle does not mean the ceremonial law only, because he gives this reason why we have righteousness, and a title to the privilege of God's children, not by the law, but by faith, "that the law worketh wrath." Rom. iv. 13.....16. "For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. Because the law worketh wrath: For where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace." Now the way in which the law works wrath, by the apostle's own account, in the reason he himself annexes, is by forbidding sin, and aggravating the guilt of the transgression; "for," says he, "where no law is, there is no transgression:" And so, chap. vii. 13. "That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." If, therefore, this reason of the apostle be good, it is much stronger against justification by the moral law than the ceremonial law; for it is by transgressions of the moral law chiefly that there comes wrath; for they are most strictly forbidden, and most terribly threatened.

6. It is evident that when the apostle says, we be not justified by the works of the law, he excludes all our own virtue, goodness, or excellency, by that reason that he gives for it, viz. "That boasting might be excluded." Rom. iii. 26, 27, 28. "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: That he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law." Eph. ii. 8, 9. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: It is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Now what are men wont to boast of, but what they esteem their own goodness or excellency? If we are not justified by the works of the ceremonial law, yet how does that exclude boasting, as long as we are justified by our own excellency, or virtue and goodness of our own, or works of righteousness which we have done.

But it is said, that boasting is excluded, as circumcision was excluded, which was what the Jews especially used to glory in, and value themselves upon, above other nations.

To this I answer, that the Jews were not only used to boast of circumcision, but were notorious for boasting of their moral righteousness. The Jews of those days were generally admirers and followers of the Pharisees, who were full of their boasts of their moral righteousness; as we may see by the example of the Pharisee mentioned in the 18th of Luke, which Christ mentions as describing the general temper of that sect: "Lord," says he, "I thank thee, that I am not as other men, an extortioner, nor unjust, nor an adulterer." The works that he boasts of were chiefly moral works: He depended on the works of the law for justification; and therefore Christ tells us, that the publican, that renounced all his own righteousness, "went down to his house justified rather than he." And elsewhere we read of the Pharisees' praying in the corners of the streets, and sounding a trumpet before them when they did alms. But those works which they so vainly boasted of were moral works: And not only so, but what the apostle,

in this very epistle, is condemning the Jews for, in their boasting of the moral law. Chap. ii. 22, 23. "Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?" The law here mentioned that they made their boast of, was that of which adultery, idolatry and sacrilege, were the breaches, which is the moral law. So that this is the boasting which the apostle condemns them for, and therefore, if they were justified by the works of this law, then how comes he to say that their boasting is excluded? And besides, when they boasted of the rites of the ceremonial law, it was under a notion of its being a part of their own goodness or excellency, or what made them holier and more lovely in the sight of God than other people; and if they were not justified by this part of their own supposed goodness or holiness, yet if they were by another, how did that exclude boasting? How was their boasting excluded, unless all goodness or excellency of their own was excluded.

The reason given by the apostle why we can be justified by faith only, and not by the works of the law, in the 3d chapter of Gal. viz. "That they that are under the law, are under the curse," makes it evident that he does not mean the ceremonial law only. In that chapter the apostle had particularly insisted upon it, that Abraham was justified by faith, and that it is by faith only, and not by the works of the law, that we can be justified, and become the children of Abraham, and be made partakers of the blessing of Abraham: And he gives this reason for it, in the 10th verse; "For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." It is manifest that these words, cited from Deuteronomy, are spoken, not only with regard to the ceremonial law, but the whole law of God to mankind, and chiefly the moral law; and that all mankind are therefore, as they are in themselves, under that curse, not only while the ceremonial law lasted, but now since that has ceased: And therefore all that are justified, are redeemed from that curse,

by Christ's bearing it for them; as there, in verse 13. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: For it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Now therefore, either its being said so, that he is cursed that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them, is a good reason why we cannot be justified by the works of that law of which it is so said; or it is not: If it be, then it is a good reason why we cannot be justified by the works of the moral law, and of the whole rule which God has given to mankind to walk by; for the words are spoken of the moral as well as the ceremonial law, and reach every command or precept which God has given to mankind; and chiefly the moral precepts, which are most strictly enjoined, and the violations of which in both New Testament and Old, and in the books of Moses themselves, are threatened with the most dreadful curse.

8. The apostle does in like manner argue against our being justified by our own righteousness, as he does against being justified by the works of the law; and evidently uses the expressions, *our own righteousness*, and *works of the law*, promiscuously, and as signifying the same thing. It is particularly evident by Rom. x. 3. "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Here it is plain that the same thing is asserted as in the two last verses but one of the foregoing chapter. "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law." And it is very unreasonable, upon several accounts, to suppose that the apostle, by their own righteousness, intends only their ceremonial righteousness. For when the apostle warns us against trusting in our own righteousness for justification, doubtless it is fair to interpret the expression in an agreement with the other scriptures, where we are warned, not to think that it is for the sake of our own righteousness that we obtain God's favor and blessing: As particularly that in Deut. ix. 4, 5, 6. "Speak not thou in thine

heart, after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land: But for the wickedness of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from before thee. Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: But for the wickedness of these nations, the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which he sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Understand therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it, for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiffnecked people." None will pretend that here the expression *thy righteousness*, signifies a ceremonial righteousness only, but all virtue or goodness of their own; yea, and the inward goodness of the heart, as well as the outward goodness of life, which appears by the beginning of the 5th verse, "Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thy heart;" and also by the antithesis in the 6th verse, "Not for thy righteousness, for thou art a stiffnecked people." Their stiffneckedness was their moral wickedness, obstinacy, and perverseness of heart: By righteousness, therefore, on the contrary, is meant their moral virtue, and rectitude of heart and life. This is what I would argue from hence, That the expression of *our own righteousness*, when used in Scripture with relation to the favor of God, and when we are warned against looking upon it as that by which that favor or the fruits of it, are obtained, does not signify a ceremonial righteousness only, but all manner of goodness of our own.

The Jews also, in the New Testament, are condemned for trusting in their own righteousness in this sense; Luke xviii. 9, &c. "And he spake this parable unto certain that trusted in themselves that they were righteous." This intends chiefly a moral righteousness; as appears by the parable itself, in which we have an account of the prayer of the Pharisee, wherein the things that he mentions as what he trusts in, are chiefly moral qualifications and performances, viz. That he was not an extortioner, unjust, nor an adulterer, &c.

But we need not go to the writings of other penmen of the scripture. If we will allow the Apostle Paul to be his own interpreter, he, when he speaks of our own righteousness as that which we are not justified or saved by, does not mean a ceremonial righteousness only, nor does he only intend a way of religion, and serving God, of our own choosing and fixing on, without divine warrant or prescription; but by our own righteousness he means the same as a righteousness of our own doing, whether it be a service or righteousness of God's prescribing, or our own unwarranted performing: Let it be an obedience to the ceremonial law, or a gospel obedience, or what it will, if it be a righteousness of our own doing, it is excluded by the apostle in this affair, as is evident by Titus iii. 5. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done."

But I would more particularly insist on this text; and therefore this may be the 9th argument, That the apostle, when he denies justification by works, and by works of the law, and by our own righteousness, does not mean works of the ceremonial law only, viz. what is said by the Apostle in Tit. iii. 3.....7. "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour: That, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Works of righteousness that we have done are here excluded, as what we are neither saved nor justified by. The apostle expressly says, we are not saved by them; and it is evident that when he says this, he has respect to the affair of justification, and that he means, we are not saved by them in not being justified by them, by the next verse but one, which is part of the same sentence. "That, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

It is several ways manifest, that the apostle in this text, by "works of righteousness which we have done," does not mean works of the ceremonial law only. It appears by the third verse, "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." These are breaches of the moral law, that the apostle observes they lived in before they were justified: And it is most plain that it is this that gives occasion to the apostle to observe, as he does in the 5th verse, that it was not by works of righteousness which they had done, that they were saved or justified.

But we need not go to the context, it is most apparent from the words themselves, that the apostle does not mean works of the ceremonial law only. If he had only said, it is not by our own works of righteousness, what could we understand by works of righteousness; but only righteous works, or, which is the same thing, good works? And to say, that it is by our own righteous works that we are justified, though not by one particular kind of righteous works, would certainly be a contradiction to such an assertion. But the words are rendered yet more strong, plain and determined in their sense, by those additional words, *which we have done*; which shews that the apostle intends to exclude all our own righteous or virtuous works universally. If it should be asserted concerning any commodity, treasure, or precious jewel, that it could not be procured by money, and not only so, but, to make the assertion the more strong, it should be asserted with additional words, that it could not be procured by money that men possess; how unreasonable would it be after all, to say, that all that was meant was, that it could not be procured with brass money?

And what renders the interpreting this text of works of the ceremonial law yet more unreasonable, is, that these works were indeed no works of righteousness but were only falsely supposed to be so by the Jews; and that our opponents in this doctrine suppose, is the very reason why we be not justified by them, because they are not works of righteousness, or because (the ceremonial law being now abrogated)

there is no obedience in them. But how absurd is it to say, that the apostle, when he says we are not justified by works of righteousness that we have done, meant only works of the ceremonial law, and that for that very reason, because they are not works of righteousness? To illustrate this by the forementioned comparison: If it should be asserted, that such a thing could not be procured by money that men possess, how ridiculous would it be to say, that the meaning only was, that it could not be procured by counterfeit money, and that for that reason because it was not money. What scripture will stand before men, if they will take liberty to manage it thus? Or what one text is there in the Bible that may not at this rate be explained away, and perverted to any sense men please?

But then further, if we should allow that the apostle intends only to oppose justification by works of the ceremonial law in his text, yet it is evident by the expression he uses, that he means to oppose it under that notion, or in that quality of their being works of righteousness of our own doing. But if the apostle argues against our being justified by works of the ceremonial law, under the notion of their being of that nature and kind, viz. works of our own doing; then it will follow that the apostle's argument is strong against, not only those, but all of that nature and kind, even all that are of our own doing.

If there were no other text in the Bible, about justification but this, this would clearly and invincibly prove that we are not justified by any of our own goodness, virtue, or righteousness, or for the excellency or righteousness of any thing that we have done in religion; because it is here so fully and strongly asserted: But this text does abundantly confirm other texts of the apostle where he denies justification by works of the law. There is no doubt can be rationally made, but that when the apostle here shews, that God "saves us according to his mercy," in that he doth not save us by "works of righteousness that we have done," verse 5, and that so we are "justified by grace," verse 7: Herein opposing salvation by works, and salvation by grace, he means the same works as he does in other places, where he in like man-

ner opposes works and grace: The same works as in Rom. xi. 6. "And if by grace, then it is no more of works: Otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: Otherwise work is no more work." And the same works as in Rom. iv. 4. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." And the same works that are spoken of in the context of the 24th verse of the foregoing chapter, which the apostle there calls "works of the law being justified freely by his grace." And of the 4th chapter, 16th verse, Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace." Where in the context, the righteousness of faith, is opposed to the righteousness of the law: For here God's saving us according to his mercy, and justifying us by grace, is opposed to saving us by works of righteousness that we have done; in the same manner as in those places, justifying us by his grace, is opposed to justifying us by works of the law.

10. The apostle could not mean works of the ceremonial law only, when he says, we are not justified by the works of the law, because it is asserted of the saints under the Old Testament as well as New. If men are justified by their sincere obedience, it will then follow that formerly, before the ceremonial law was abrogated, men were justified by the works of the ceremonial law as well as the moral. For if we are justified by our sincere obedience, then it alters not the case, whether the commands be moral or positive, provided they be God's commands, and our obedience be obedience to God: And so the case must be just the same under the Old Testament, with the works of the moral law and ceremonial, according to the measure of the virtue of obedience there was in either. It is true, their obedience to the ceremonial law would have nothing to do in the affair of justification, unless it was sincere; and so neither would the works of the moral law; obedience to the moral law would have been concerned in the affair of justification, if sincere; and so would obedience to the ceremonial. If obedience was the thing, then obedience to the ceremonial law, while that stood in force, and obedience to the moral law, had just the same sort of concern, accord-

ing to the proportion of obedience that consists in each; as now under the New Testament, if obedience is what we are justified by, that obedience must doubtless comprehend obedience to all God's commands now in force, to the positive precepts of attendance on baptism and the Lord's supper, as well as moral precepts. If obedience be the thing, it is not because it is obedience to such a kind of commands, but because it is obedience. So that by this supposition the saints under the Old Testament were justified, at least in part, by their obedience to the ceremonial law.

But it is evident that the saints under the Old Testament were not justified in any measure by the works of the ceremonial law. This may be proved, proceeding on the foot of our adversary's own interpretation of the apostle's phrase, of the works of the law, and supposing him to mean by it only the works of the ceremonial law. To instance in David, it is evident that he was not justified in any wise by the works of the ceremonial law, by Rom. iv. 6, 7, 8. Even as David also describeth, "the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." It is plain that the apostle is here speaking of justification, by the preceding verse and by all the context; and the thing spoken of, viz. forgiving iniquities and covering sins, is what our adversaries themselves suppose to be justification, and even the whole of justification. This David, speaking of himself, says (by the apostle's interpretation) that he had without works. For it is manifest that David, in the words here cited, from the beginning of the 32d Psalm, has a special respect to himself: He speaks of his own sins being forgiven and not imputed to him; as appears by the words that immediately follow. "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old; through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: My moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid: I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Let us therefore under-

are justified, according to their scheme; for still, according to them, it may be said, in the same manner, of the precepts of the gospel, he that doth these things, shall live in them: The difference lies only in the things to be done, but not at all in that, that the doing of them is not the condition of living in them, just in the one case, as in the other. The words "He that doth them, shall live in them," will serve just as well for a description of the latter as the former. By the apostle's saying, the righteousness of the law is described thus, he that doth these things shall live in them; but the righteousness of faith saith thus, plainly intimates that the righteousness of faith saith otherwise, and in an opposite manner. But besides, if these words cited from Moses, are actually said by him of the moral law as well as ceremonial, as it is most evident they are, it renders it still more absurd to suppose them mentioned by the apostle, as the very note of distinction between justification by a ceremonial obedience, and a moral and sincere obedience, as the Arminians must suppose.

Thus I have spoken to a second argument, to prove that we are not justified by any manner of virtue or goodness of our own, viz. that to suppose otherwise, is contrary to the doctrine that is directly urged, and abundantly insisted on, by the Apostle Paul in his epistles.

I now proceed to a

Third Argument, viz. That to suppose that we are justified by our own sincere obedience, or any of our own virtue or goodness, derogates from gospel grace.

That scheme of justification that manifestly takes from, or diminishes the grace of God, is undoubtedly to be rejected; for it is the declared design of God in the gospel, to exalt the freedom and riches of his grace, in that method of justification of sinners, and way of admitting them to his favor, and the blessed fruits of it, which it declares. The scripture teaches, that the way of justification that is appointed in the gospel covenant, is appointed as it is, for that end, that free grace might be expressed and glorified? Rom. iv. 16..... "Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace." The exercising and magnifying the free grace of God in the gospel

contrivance for the justification and salvation of sinners, is evidently the chief design of it; and this freedom and riches of the grace of the gospel is every where spoken of in Scripture as the chief glory of it. Therefore that doctrine that derogates from the free grace of God in justifying sinners, as it is most opposite to God's design, so it must be exceedingly offensive to him.

Those that maintain, that we are justified by our own sincere obedience, do pretend that their scheme does not diminish the grace of the gospel; for they say, that the grace of God is wonderfully manifested in appointing such a way and method of salvation, by sincere obedience in assisting us to perform such an obedience, and in accepting our imperfect obedience instead of perfect.

Let us therefore examine that matter, whether their scheme, of a man's being justified by his own virtue and sincere obedience, does derogate from the grace of God or no; or whether free grace is not more exalted, in supposing as we do, that we are justified without any manner of goodness of our own. In order to this, I will lay down this selfevident

Proposition, That "whatsoever that be by which the abundant benevolence of the giver is expressed, and gratitude in the receiver is obliged, that magnifies free grace." This I suppose none will ever controvert or dispute.

And it is not much less evident, that it doth both shew a more abundant benevolence in the giver when he shews kindness without goodness or excellency in the object, to move him to it; and that it enhances the obligation to gratitude in the receiver.

1. It shews a more abundant goodness in the giver, when he shews kindness without any excellency in our persons or actions that would move the giver to love and beneficence. For it certainly shews the more abundant and overflowing goodness, or disposition to communicate good, by how much the less loveliness or excellency there is to entice beneficence: The less there is in the receiver to draw good will and kindness, it argues the more of the principle of good will and kindness in the giver; for one that has but a little of a

principle of love and benevolence, may be drawn to do good and to shew kindness, when there is a great deal to draw him, or when there is much excellency and loveliness in the object to move good will; when he whose goodness and benevolence is more abundant, will shew kindness where there is less to draw it forth; for he does not so much need to have it drawn from without, he has enough of the principle, within, to move him of itself. Where there is most of the principle, there it is most sufficient for itself, and stands in least need of something without to excite it: For certainly a more abundant goodness more easily flows forth with less to impel or draw it, than where there is less; or, which is the same thing, the more any one is disposed of himself, the less he needs from without himself, to put him upon it, or stir him up to it. And therefore his kindness appears the more exceeding great when it is bestowed without any excellency or loveliness in the receiver, or when the receiver is respected in the gift, as wholly without excellency: And much more still when the benevolence of the giver not only finds nothing in the receiver to draw it, but a great deal of hatefulness to repel it: The abundance of goodness is then manifested, not only in flowing forth without any thing extrinsic to put it forward, but in overcoming great repulsion in the object. And then does kindness and love appear most triumphant, and wonderfully great, when the receiver is respected in the gift, as not only wholly without all excellence or beauty to attract it, but altogether, yea, infinitely vile and hateful.

2. It is apparent also that it enhances the obligation to gratitude in the receiver. This is agreeable to the common sense of mankind, that the less worthy or excellent the object of benevolence, or the receiver of kindness, is, the more he is obliged, and the greater gratitude is due. He therefore is most of all obliged, that receives kindness without any goodness or excellency in himself, but with a total and universal hatefulness. And as it is agreeable to the common sense of mankind, so it is agreeable to the word of God. How often does God in the scripture insist on this argument with men, to move them to love him, and to acknowledge his kindness?

How much does he insist on this as an obligation to gratitude, that they are so sinful and undeserving, and ill deserving?

Therefore it certainly follows, that that doctrine that teaches, that God, when he justifies a man, and shews him that great kindness, as to give him a right to eternal life, does not do it for any obedience, or any manner of goodness of his; but that justification respects a man as ungodly, and wholly without any manner of virtue, beauty or excellency. I say, this doctrine does certainly more exalt the free grace of God in justification, and man's obligation to gratitude to him for such a favor, than the contrary doctrine, viz. That God, in shewing this kindness to man, respects him as sincerely obedient and virtuous, and as having something in him that is truly excellent, and lovely, and acceptable in his sight, and that this goodness or excellency of man is the very fundamental condition of the bestowment of that kindness on him, or of the distinguishing him from others by that benefit. But I hasten to a

Fourth argument for the truth of the doctrine, "That to suppose that a man is justified by his own virtue or obedience, derogates from the honor of the Mediator, and ascribes that to man's virtue that belongs only to the righteousness of Christ:"

It puts man in Christ's stead, and makes him his own Saviour, in a respect in which Christ only is the Saviour: And so it is a doctrine contrary to the nature and design of the gospel, which is to abase man, and to ascribe all the glory of our salvation to Christ the Redeemer. It is inconsistent with the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, which is a gospel doctrine. Here I would,

1. Explain what we mean by the imputation of Christ's righteousness.

2. Prove the thing intended by it to be true.

3. Shew that this doctrine is utterly inconsistent with the doctrine of our being justified by our own virtue or sincere obedience.

First, I would explain what we mean by the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Sometimes the expression is taken by our divines in a larger sense, for the imputation of all that

Christ did and suffered for our redemption, whereby we are free from guilt, and stand righteous in the sight of God; and so implies the imputation both of Christ's satisfaction and obedience. But here I intend it in a stricter sense, for the imputation of that righteousness or moral goodness that consists in the obedience to Christ. And by that righteousness being imputed to us, is meant no other than this, that that righteousness of Christ is accepted for us, and admitted instead of that perfect inherent righteousness that ought to be in ourselves: Christ's perfect obedience shall be reckoned to our account, so that we shall have the benefit of it, as though we had performed it ourselves: And so we suppose that a title to eternal life is given us as the reward of this righteousness. The scripture uses the word *impute* in this sense, viz. for reckoning any thing belonging to any person, to another person's account: As Philemon 18. "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account." In the original it is τὸτο ἐμοι ἐλλογει *impute that to me*. It is a word of the same root with that which is translated *impute*, Rom. iv. 6. "To whom God imputeth righteousness without works." And it is the very same word that is used in Rom. v. 13, that is translated *impute*, "sin is not imputed when there is no law."

The opposers of this doctrine suppose that there is an absurdity in it: They say that to suppose that God imputes Christ's obedience to us, is to suppose that God is mistaken, and thinks that we performed that obedience that Christ performed. But why cannot that righteousness be reckoned to our account, and be accepted for us, without any such absurdity? Why is there any more absurdity in it, than in a merchant's transferring debt or credit from one man's account to another, when one man pays a price for another, so that it shall be accepted, as if that other had paid it? Why is there any more absurdity in supposing that Christ's obedience is imputed to us, than that his satisfaction is imputed? If Christ has suffered the penalty of the law for us, and in our stead, then it will follow, that his suffering that penalty is imputed to us, i. e. that it is accepted for us, and in our stead, and is reckoned to our account, as though we had suffered it. But

Why may not his obeying the law of God be as rationally reckoned to our account, as his suffering the penalty of the law? Why may not a price to bring into debt, be as rationally transferred from one person's account to another, as a price to pay a debt? Having thus explained what we mean by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, I proceed,

Secondly, To prove that the righteousness of Christ is thus imputed.

1. There is the very same need of Christ's obeying the law in our stead, in order to the reward, as of his suffering the penalty of the law in our stead, in order to our escaping the penalty; and the same reason why one should be accepted on our account, as the other. There is the same need of one as the other, that the law of God might be answered: One was as requisite to answer the law as the other. This is certain, that that was the reason why there was need that Christ should suffer the penalty for us, even that the law might be answered; for this the scripture plainly teaches. This is given as the reason why Christ was made a curse for us, that the law threatened a curse to us, Gal. iii. 10, 13. But the same law that fixes the curse of God as the consequent of not continuing in all things written in the law to do them, verse 10, has as much fixed doing those things as an antecedent of living in them, (as verse 12, the next verse but one.) There is as much of a connexion established in one case as in the other. There is therefore exactly the same need, from the law, of perfect obedience being fulfilled in order to our obtaining the reward, as there is of death's being suffered in order to our escaping the punishment; or the same necessity by the law, of perfect obedience preceding life, as there is of disobedience being succeeded by death. The law is, without doubt, as much of an established rule in one case as in the other.

Christ by suffering the penalty, and so making atonement for us, only removes the guilt of our sins, and so sets us in the same state that Adam was the first moment of his creation: And it is no more fit that we should obtain eternal life only on that account, than that Adam should have the reward of eter-

nal life, or of a confirmed and unalterable state of happiness, the first moment of his existence, without any obedience at all. Adam was not to have the reward merely on the account of his being innocent; if so, he would have had it fixed upon him at once, as soon as ever he was created; for he was as innocent then as he could be: But he was to have the reward on the account of his activeness in obedience; not on the account merely of his not having done ill, but on the account of his doing well.

So on the same account we have not eternal life merely on the account of being void of guilt, (as Adam was at first existence) which we have by the atonement of Christ; but on the account of Christ's activeness in obedience and doing well. Christ is our second federal head, and is called the second Adam, 1 Cor. xv. 22, because he acted the part for us that the first Adam should have done. When he had undertaken for us to stand in our stead, he was looked upon and treated as though he were guilty with our guilt; and by his satisfying or bearing the penalty, he did as it were free himself from this guilt. But by this the second Adam did only bring himself into the state that the first Adam was in on the first moment of his existence, viz. a state of mere freedom from guilt; and hereby indeed was free from any obligation to suffer punishment: But this being supposed, there was no need of something further, even a positive obedience, in order to his obtaining, as our second Adam, the reward of eternal life.

God saw meet to place man first in a state of trial, and not to give him a title to eternal life as soon as he had made him; because it was his will that he should first give honor to his authority, by fully submitting to it, in will and act, and perfectly obeying his law. God insisted upon it, that his holy majesty and law should have their due acknowledgment and honor from man, such as became the relation he stood in to that Being that created him, before he would bestow the reward of confirmed and everlasting happiness upon him; and therefore God gave him a law when he created him, that he might have opportunity, by giving the due honor to his au-

thority in obeying it, to obtain this happiness. It therefore became Christ, seeing that in assuming man to himself, he sought a title to this eternal happiness for him after he had broken the law, that he himself should become subject to God's authority, and be in the form of a servant, that he might do that honor to God's authority for him, by his obedience, which God at first required of man as the condition of his having a title to that reward. Christ came into the world to that end, to render the honor of God's authority and law consistent with the salvation and eternal life of sinners; he came to save them, and withal to assert and vindicate the honor of the lawgiver, and his holy law. Now if the sinner, after his sin was satisfied for, had eternal life bestowed upon him without active righteousness, the honor of his law would not be sufficiently vindicated. Supposing this were possible, that the sinner himself could, by suffering, pay the debt, and afterwards be in the same state that he was in before his probation, that is to say, negatively righteous, or merely without guilt; if he now at last should have eternal life bestowed upon him, without performing that condition of obedience; then God would recede from his law, and would give the promised reward, and his law never have respect and honor shewn to it, in that way of being obeyed. But now Christ, by subjecting himself to the law, and obeying of it, has done great honor to the law, and to the authority of God who gave it. That so glorious a person should become subject to the law, and fulfil it, has done much more honor to it, than if mere man had obeyed it. It was a thing infinitely honorable to God, that a person of infinite dignity was not ashamed to call him his God, and to adore and obey him as such: This was more to God's honor than if any mere creature, of any possible degree of excellency and dignity, had so done.

It is absolutely necessary, that in order to a sinner's being justified, the righteousness of some other should be reckoned to his account; for it is declared, that the person justified is looked upon as (in himself) ungodly; but God neither will nor can justify a person without a righteousness; for justification is manifestly a *forensick* term, as the word is used in

scripture, and the thing a judicial thing, or the act of a judge: So that if a person should be justified without a righteousness, the judgment would not be according to truth: The sentence of justification would be a false sentence, unless there be a righteousness performed that is by the judge properly looked upon as his. To say, that God does not justify the sinner without sincere, though an imperfect obedience, does not help the case; for an imperfect righteousness before a judge is no righteousness. To accept of something that falls short of the rule, instead of something else that answers the rule, is no judicial act, or act of a judge, but a pure act of sovereignty. An imperfect righteousness is no righteousness before a judge; for "righteousness (as one observes) is a relative thing, and has always relation to a law. The formal nature of righteousness, properly understood, lies in a conformity of actions to that which is the rule and measure of them." Therefore that only is righteousness in the sight a judge that answers the law.* The law is the judge's rule: If he par-

* That it is perfect obedience, that is what is called righteousness in the New Testament, and that this righteousness, or perfect obedience, is by God's fixed unalterable rule, the condition of justification, is from the plain evidence of truth, confessed by a certain great man, that no body will think to be a likely person to be blinded by a prejudice in favor of the doctrine we are maintaining, and one who did not receive this doctrine, viz. Mr. Locke, in his *Reasonableness of Christianity, as delivered in the Scriptures*, vol. 2 of his works, page 474. "To one that thus unbiassed reads the Scripture what Adam fell from is visible, was the state of perfect obedience, which is called *justice* in the New Testament, though the word, which in the original signifies justice, be translated *righteousness*." Ibid p. 476, 477. "For righteousness, or an exact obedience to the law seems by the Scripture to have a claim of right to eternal life; Rom. iv. 4. *To him that worketh* i. e. does the works of the law *is the reward reckoned, not reckoned of grace, but of debt*. On the other side, it seems the unalterable purpose of the divine justice, that no unrighteous person, no one that is guilty of any breach of the law, should be in paradise; but that the wages of sin should be to every man, as it was to Adam, an exclusion of him out of that happy state of immortality, and bring death upon him And this is so conformable to the eternal and established law of right and wrong, that it is spoke of too as it could not be otherwise. Here then we have the standing and fixed measures of life and death; immortality and bliss belonging to the righteous. Those who have lived in an exact conformity to the law of God are out of the

dons and hides what really is, and so does not pass sentence according to what things are in themselves, he either does not act the part of a judge, or else judges falsely. The very notion of judging is to determine what is, and what is not, in any one's case. The judge's work is twofold; it is to determine first what is fact, and then whether what is in fact be according to rule, or according to the law. If a judge has no rule or law established beforehand, by which he should proceed in judging, he has no foundation to go upon in judging, he has no opportunity to be a judge; nor is it possible that he should do the part of a judge. To judge without a law, or rule by which to judge, is impossible; for the very notion of judging, is to determine whether the object of judgment be according to rule; and therefore God has declared, that when he acts as a judge, he will not justify the wicked, and cannot clear the guilty; and, by parity of reason, cannot justify without righteousness.

And the scheme of the old law's being abrogated and a new law introduced, will not help at all in this difficulty; for

reach of death; but an exclusion from paradise and loss of immortality, is the portion of sinners, of all those who have any way broke that law, and failed of a complete obedience to it, by the guilt of any one trangression. And thus mankind, by the law, are put upon the issues of life or death, as they are righteous or unrighteous, just or unjust, i. e. exact performers or trangressors of the law." Again, in p. 477. "The law of works then in short is, that law which requires perfect obedience, without any remission or abatement; so that by that law a man cannot be just, or justified, without an exact performance of every tittle. Such a perfect obedience in the New Testament, is termed Δικαιοσυνη, which we translate *righteousness*." In which last passage it is also to be noted, that Mr. Locke, by the law of works does not understand the ceremonial law, but the covenant of works: As he more fully expresses himself in the next paragraph but one." Where this law of works was to be found, the New Testament tells us, viz. in the law delivered by Moses; John. 17. *The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.* Chap. vii. 19. *Did not Moses give you the law,* says our Saviour, *and yet none of you keep the law?* And this is the law which he speaks of verse 28. *This do and thou shalt live.* This is that which St. Paul so often styles *the law,* without any other distinction; Rom ii. 13. *Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law are justified.* It is needless to quote any more places, his epistles are all full of it, especially this to the Romans.

an imperfect righteousness cannot answer the law of God that we are under, whether that be an old one or a new one; for every law requires perfect obedience to itself. Every rule whatsoever requires perfect conformity to itself; it is a contradiction to suppose otherwise. For to say, that there is a law that does not require perfect obedience to itself, is to say that there is a law that does not require all that it requires. That law that now forbids sin, is certainly the law that we are now under, (let that be an old one or new one;) or else it is not sin. That which is not forbidden, and is the breach of no law, is not sin. But if we are now forbidden to commit sin, then it is by a law that we are now under; for surely we are neither under the forbiddings nor commanding of a law that we are not under. Therefore, if all sin is now forbidden, then we are now under a law that requires perfect obedience; and therefore nothing can be accepted as a righteousness in the sight of our Judge, but perfect righteousness. So that our judge cannot justify us, unless he sees a perfect righteousness, some way belonging to us, either performed by ourselves, or by another, and justly and duly reckoned to our account.

God doth, in the sentence of justification pronounce a man perfectly righteous, or else he would need a further justification after he is justified. His sins being removed by Christ's atonement, is not sufficient for his justification; for justifying a man, as has been already shewn, in not merely pronouncing him innocent, or without guilt, but standing right with regard to the rule that he is under, and righteous unto life: But this, according to the established rule of nature, reason, and divine appointment, is a positive, perfect righteousness.

As there is the same need that Christ's obedience should be reckoned to our account, as that his atonement should; so there is the same reason why it should. As if Adam had persevered, and finished his course of obedience, we should have received the benefit of his obedience, as much as now we have the mischief of his disobedience; so in like manner, there is reason that we should receive the benefit of the second Adam's obedience, as of his atonement of our disobedi-

fice. Believers are represented in scripture as being so in Christ, as that they are legally one, or accepted as one, by the Supreme Judge: Christ has assumed our nature, and has so assumed all, in that nature that belong to him, into such an union with himself, that he is become their Head, and has taken them to be his members. And therefore, what Christ has done in our nature, whereby he did honor to the law and authority of God by his acts, as well as the reparation to the honor of the law by his sufferings, is reckoned to the believer's account; so as that the believer should be made happy, because it was so well and worthily done by his Head, as well as freed from being miserable, because he has suffered for our ill and unworthy doing.

When Christ had once undertaken with God to stand for us, and put himself under our law, by that law he was obliged to suffer, and by the same law he was obliged to obey: By the same law, after he had taken man's guilt upon him, he himself being our surety, could not be acquitted until he had suffered, nor rewarded until he had obeyed: But he was not acquitted as a private person, but as our head, and believers are acquitted in his acquittance; nor was he accepted to a reward for his obedience, as a private person, but as our Head, and we are accepted to a reward in his acceptance. The scripture teaches us that when Christ was raised from the dead, he was justified; which justification, as I have already shewn, implies, both his acquittance from our guilt, and his acceptance to the exaltation and glory that was the reward of his obedience: But believers, as soon as they believe, are admitted to partake with Christ in this his justification: Hence we are told, that he was "raised again for our justification," Rom. iv. 25, which is true, not only of that part of his justification that consists in his acquittance, but also his acceptance to his reward. The Scripture teaches us that he is exalted, and gone to heaven to take possession of glory in our name, as our forerunner, Heb. vi. 20. We are as it were, both raised up together with Christ, and also made to sit together with Christ, in heavenly places, and in him, Eph. ii. 6.

If it be objected here, that there is this reason, why what Christ suffered should be accepted on our account, rather than the obedience he performed, that he was obliged to obedience for himself, but was not obliged to suffer but only on our account; to this I answer, that Christ was not obliged, on his own account, to undertake to obey. Christ, in his original circumstances, was in no subjection to the Father, being altogether equal with him: He was under no obligation to put himself in man's stead, and under man's law; or to put himself into any state of subjection to God whatsoever. There was a transaction between the Father and the Son, that was antecedent to Christ's becoming man, and being made under the law, wherein he undertook to put himself under the law, and both to obey and to suffer; in which transaction these things were already virtually done in the sight of God; as is evident by this, that God acted on the ground of that transaction, justifying and saving sinners, as if the things undertaken had been actually performed long before they were performed indeed. And therefore, without doubt, in order to the estimating the value and validity of what Christ did and suffered, we must look back to that transaction, wherein these things were first undertaken, and virtually done in the sight of God, and see what capacity and circumstances Christ acted in then, and then we shall find that Christ was under no manner of obligation, either to obey the law, or suffer the penalty of it. After this he was equally under obligation to both; for henceforward he stood as our surety or representative: And therefore this consequent obligation may be as much of an objection against the validity of his suffering the penalty, as against his obedience. But if we look to that original transaction between the Father and the Son, wherein both these were undertaken and accepted as virtually done in the sight of the Father, we shall find Christ acting with regard to both, as one perfectly in his own right, and under no manner of previous obligation to hinder the validity of either.

2. To suppose that all that Christ does is only to make atonement for us by suffering, is to make him our Saviour but in part. It is to rob him of half his glory as a Saviour.

For if so, all that he does is to deliver us from hell; he does not purchase heaven for us. The adverse scheme supposes that he purchases heaven for us, in the sense, that he satisfies for the imperfections of our obedience, and so purchase that our sincere imperfect obedience might be accepted as the condition of eternal life; and so purchases an opportunity for us to obtain heaven by our own obedience. But to purchase heaven for us only in this sense, is to purchase it in no sense at all; for all of it comes to no more than a satisfaction for our sins, or removing the penalty by suffering in our stead: For all the purchasing they speak of, that our imperfect obedience should be accepted, is only his satisfying for the sinful imperfections of our obedience; or (which is the same thing) making atonement for the sin that our obedience is attended with. But that is not purchasing heaven, merely to set us at liberty again, that we may go and get heaven by what we do ourselves; all that Christ does is only to pay a debt for us; there is no positive purchase of any good. We are taught in scripture that heaven is purchased for us; it is called the *purchased possession*, Eph. i. 14. The gospel proposes the eternal inheritance, not to be acquired, as the first covenant did, but as already acquired and purchased. But he that pays a man's debt for him, and so delivers him from slavery, cannot be said to purchase an estate for him, merely because he sets him at liberty, so that henceforward he has an opportunity to get an estate by his own hand labor. So that according to this scheme, the saints in heaven have no reason to thank Christ for purchasing heaven for them, or redeeming them to God, and making them kings and priests, as we have an that account that they do, in Rev. v. 9.

3. Justification by the righteousness and obedience of Christ, is a doctrine that the scripture teaches in very full terms; Rom. v. 18, 19. "By the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners: So by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous." Here in one verse we are told, that we have justification by Christ's righteousness; and, that there might be no room to

understand the righteousness spoken of, merely of Christ's atonement by his suffering the penalty, in the next verse it is put in other terms, and asserted, that it is by Christ's obedience that we are made righteous. It is scarce possible any thing should be more full and determined: The terms, taken singly, are such as do fix their own meaning, and taken together, they fix the meaning of each other: The words shew that we are justified by that righteousness of Christ that consists in his obedience, and that we are made righteous or justified by that obedience of his, that is, his righteousness, or moral goodness before God.

Here possibly it may be objected, that this text means only, that we are justified by Christ's passive obedience.

To this I answer, whether we call it active or passive, it alters not the case as to the present argument, as long as it is evident by the words, that it is not merely under the notion of an atonement for disobedience, or a satisfaction for unrighteousness, but under the notion of a positive obedience, and a righteousness or moral goodness, that it justifies us or makes us righteous; because both the words *righteousness* and *obedience* are used, and used too as the opposites of sin and disobedience, and an offence. "Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation: Even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners: So by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous." Now, what can be meant by righteousness, when spoken of as the opposite to sin, or moral evil, but only moral goodness? What is the righteosness that is the opposite of an offence, but only the behavior that is well pleasing? And what can be meant by obedience, when spoken of as the opposite of disobedience, or going contrary to a command, but a positive obeying, and an actual complying with the command? So that there is no room for any invented distinction of active and passive, to hurt the argument from this scripture, as long as it is evident by it as any thing can be, that believers are justified by the righteousness and obedience of Christ, under the notion of his moral

goodness, and his positive obeying, and actual complying with the commands of God, and that behavior of his, that, because of its conformity to his commands, was well pleasing in his sight. This is all that ever any need to desire to have granted in this dispute.

By this it appears that if Christ's dying be here included in the words *righteousness* and *obedience*, it is not merely as a propitiation, or bearing a penalty of a broken law in our stead, but as his voluntary submitting and yeilding himself to those sufferings, was an act of obedience to the Father's commands, and so was a part of his positive righteousness, or moral goodness.

Indeed all obedience, considered under the notion of obedience or righteousness, is something active, something that is done in active and voluntary compliance with a command; whether that which we do in obedience is something easy, and something that may be done without suffering, or whether it be something hard and difficult; yet as it is obedience, or righteousness, or moral goodness, it must be considered as something voluntary and active. If any one is commanded to go through difficulties and sufferings, and he, in compliance with this command, voluntarily does it, he properly obeys in so doing; and as he voluntarily does it in compliance with a command, his obedience is as active as any whatsoever. It is the same sort of obedience, a thing of the very same nature, as when a man, in compliance with a command, does a piece of hard service, or goes through hard labor; and there is no room to distinguish between such obedience and other that is more easy, to make a different sort of obedience of it, as if it were a thing of quite a different nature, by such opposite terms as active and passive: All the distinction that can be pretended, is that which is between obeying an easy command and a difficult one. But is not the obedience itself of the same nature, because the commands to be obeyed are some of them more difficult than others? Is there from hence any foundation to make two species of obedience, one active and the other passive? There is no appearance of any such distinction ever entering into the hearts of any of the penmen of scripture.

It is true, that of late, when a man refuses to obey the precept of an human law, but patiently yields himself up to suffer the penalty of the law, it is called passive obedience: But this I suppose is only a modern use of the word obedience; surely it is a sense of the word that the scripture is a perfect stranger to; and it is improperly called obedience, unless there be such a precept in the law, that he shall yield himself patiently to suffer, to which his so doing shall be an active, voluntary conformity. There may in some sense be said to be a conformity to the law in a person's suffering the penalty of the law; but no other conformity to the law is properly called obedience to it but an active, voluntary conformity to the precepts of it: The word *obey* is often found in scripture with respect to the law of God to man, but never in any other sense.

It is true that Christ's willingly undergoing those sufferings which he endured, is a great part of that obedience or righteousness by which we are justified. The sufferings of Christ are respected in scripture under a twofold consideration, either merely as his being substituted for us, or put into our stead in suffering the penalty of the law; and so his sufferings are considered as a satisfaction and propitiation for sin: Or as he, in obedience to a law or command of the Father, voluntarily submitted himself to those sufferings, and actively yielded himself up to bear them; and so they are considered as his righteousness, and a part of his active obedience. Christ underwent death in obedience to the command of the Father, Psalm xl. 6, 7, 8. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened: Burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: In the volume of the book is written of me: I delight to do thy will; O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." John, x. 17, 18. "I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." John xviii. 11. "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" And this is part, and

indeed the principal part of that active obedience that we are justified by.

It can be no just objection against this, that that command of the Father to Christ, that he should lay down his life, was no part of the law that we had broken; and therefore, that his obeying this command could be no part of that obedience that he performed for us, because we needed that he should obey no other law for us, but only that which we had broken or failed of obeying. For although it must be the same legislative authority, whose honor is repaired by Christ's obedience, that we have injured by our disobedience; yet there is no need that the law that Christ obeys should be precisely the same that Adam was to have obeyed, in that sense, that there should be no positive precepts wanting, nor any added: There was wanting the precept about the forbidden fruit, and there was added the ceremonial law. The thing required was perfect obedience: It is no matter whether the positive precepts were the same, if they were equivalent. The positive precepts that Christ was to obey, were much more than equivalent to what was wanting, because infinitely more difficult, particularly the command that he had received to lay down his life, which was his principal act of obedience, and which above all others is concerned in our justification. As that act of disobedience by which we fell, was disobedience to a positive precept that Christ never was under, viz. that of abstaining from the tree of knowledge of good and evil; so that act of obedience by which principally we are redeemed, is obedience to a positive precept that Adam never was under, viz. the precept of laying down his life. It was suitable that it should be a positive precept, that should try both Adam's and Christ's obedience: Such precepts are the greatest and most proper trial of obedience; because in them, the mere authority and will of the legislator is the sole ground of the obligation, (and nothing in the nature of the things themselves;) and therefore they are the greatest trial of any person's respect to that authority and will.

The law that Christ was subject to, and obeyed, was in some sense the same that was given to Adam. There are

innumerable particular duties that are required by the law only conditionally; and in such circumstances, are comprehended in some great and general rule of that law. Thus, for instance, there are innumerable acts of respect and obedience to men, which are required by the law of nature, (which was a law given to Adam) which yet be not required absolutely, but upon many prerequisite conditions; as, that there be men standing in such relations to us, and that they gave forth such commands, and the like. So many acts of respect and obedience to God are included, in like manner, in the moral law conditionally, or such and such things being supposed; as Abraham's going about to sacrifice his son, the Jews, circumcising their children when eight days old, and Adam's not eating the forbidden fruit; they are virtually comprehended in that great general rule of the moral law, that we should obey God, and be subject to him in whatsoever he pleases to command us. Certainly the moral law does as much require us to obey God's positive commands, as it requires us to obey the positive commands of our parents. And thus all that Adam, and all that Christ was commanded, even his observing the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish worship, and his laying down his life, was virtually included in the same great law*.

It is no objection against the last mentioned thing, even Christ's laying down his life, its being included in the moral

* Thus Mr. Locke in his *Reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the Scriptures*, vol. 2d. of his work, p. 478. "Nay, *whatever God requires any where to be done*, without making any allowance for faith, that is a part of the law of works. So that forbidding Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge, was part of the law of works. Only we must take notice here, that some of God's positive commands being for peculiar ends, and suited to particular circumstances of times, places and persons, have a limited, and only temporary obligation, by virtue of God's positive injunction. Such as was that part of Moses' law which concerned the outward worship or political constitution of the Jews, and is called the ceremonial and judaical law" Again, p. 479. "Thus then as to the law in short, the civil and ritual part of the law delivered by Moses obliges not Christians, though to the Jews it were a part of the law of works; it being a part of the law of nature, that men ought to obey every positive law of God, whenever he shall please to make any such addition to the law of his nature."

law given to Adam; because that law itself allowed of no occasion for any such thing; for the moral law virtually includes all right acts, on all possible occasions, even occasions that the law itself allows not: Thus we are obliged by the moral law to mortify our lusts, and repent of our sins, though that law allows of no lust to mortify, or sin to repent of.

There is indeed but one great law of God, and that is the same law that says, "if thou sinnest, thou shalt die;" and "cursed is every one that continues not in all things contained in this law to do them." All duties of positive institution are virtually comprehended in this law: And therefore, if the Jews broke the ceremonial law, it exposed them to the penalty of the law, or covenant of works, which threatened, "thou shalt surely die." The law is the eternal and unalterable rule of righteousness between God and man, and therefore is the rule of judgment, by which all that a man does shall be either justified or condemned; and no sin exposes to damnation, but by the law: So now he that refuses to obey the precepts that require an attendance on the sacraments of the New Testament, is exposed to damnation, by virtue of the law or covenant of works. It may moreover be argued, that all sins whatsoever are breaches of the law or covenant of works, because all sins, even breaches of the positive precepts, as well as others, have atonement by the death of Christ: But what Christ died for, was to satisfy the law, or to bear the curse of the law; as appears by Gal. iii. 10.....13, and Rom. viii. 3, 4.

So that Christ's laying down his life might be part of that obedience by which we are justified, though it was a positive precept not given to Adam. It was doubtless Christ's main act of obedience, because it was obedience to a command that was attended with immensely the greatest difficulty, and so to a command that was the greatest trial of his obedience. His respect shown to God in it, and his honor to God's authority was proportionably great: It is spoken of in scripture as Christ's principal act of obedience. Philip. ii. 7, 8. "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the like-

ness of men: And, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Heb. v. 8. "Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered." It was mainly by this act of obedience that Christ purchased so glorious a reward for himself: As in that place in Philippians, ii. 8, 9. "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. And it therefore follows from what has been already said, that it is mainly by this act of obedience that believers in Christ also have the reward of glory, or come to partake with Christ in his glory. We are as much saved by the death of Christ, as his yielding himself to die was an act of obedience, as we are, as it was a propitiation for our sins: For as it was not the only act of obedience that merited, he having performed meritorious acts of obedience through the whole course of his life; so neither was it the only suffering that was propitiatory; all his sufferings through the whole course of his life being propitiatory, as well as every act of obedience meritorious: Indeed this was his principal suffering; and it was as much his principal act of obedience.

Hence we may see how that the death of Christ did not only make atonement, but also merited eternal life; and hence we may see how by the blood of Christ we are not only redeemed from sin, but redeemed unto God; and therefore the scripture seems every where to attribute the whole of salvation to the blood of Christ: This precious blood is as much the main price by which heaven is purchased, as it is the main price by which we are redeemed from hell. The positive righteousness of Christ, or that price by which he merited, was of equal value with that by which he satisfied; for indeed it was the same price. He spilled his blood to satisfy, and by reason of the infinite dignity of his person, his sufferings were looked upon as of infinite value, and equivalent to the eternal sufferings of a finite creature: And he spilled his blood out of respect to the honor of God's majesty and in submission to his authority, who had commanded him so to do:

And his obedience therein was of infinite value; both because of the dignity of the person that performed it, and because he put himself to infinite expense to perform it, whereby the infinite degree of his regard to God's authority appeared.

One would wonder what the Arminians mean by Christ's merits. They talk of Christ's merits as much as any body, and yet deny the imputation of Christ's positive righteousness. What should there be that any one should merit or deserve any thing by, besides righteousness or goodness? If any thing that Christ did or suffered, merited or deserved any thing, it was by virtue of the goodness, or righteousness, or holiness of it: If Christ's sufferings and death merited heaven it must be because there was an excellent righteousness and transcendent moral goodness in that act of laying down his life: And if by that excellent righteousness he merited heaven for us; then surely that righteousness is reckoned to our account, that we have the benefit of it, or which is the same thing, it is imputed to us.

Thus, I hope I have made it evident, that the righteousness of Christ is indeed imputed to us. I proceed now to the

Third and last thing under this argument, that this doctrine, of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, is utterly inconsistent with the doctrine of our being justified by our own virtue or sincere obedience. If acceptance to God's favor, and a title to life, be given to believers as the reward of Christ's obedience, then it is not given as the reward of our own obedience. In what respect soever Christ is our Saviour, that doubtless excludes our being our own saviours in the same respect that Christ is, it will thence follow, that the salvation of Christ is needless in that respect; according to the apostle's reasoning, Gal. v. 4. "Christ is rendered of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law." Doubtless, it is Christ's prerogative to be our Saviour in that sense wherein he is our Saviour: And therefore if it be by his obedience that we are justified, then it is not by our own obedience.

Here perhaps it may be said, that a title to salvation is not directly given as the reward of our obedience; for that is not by any thing of ours, but only by Christ's satisfaction and righteousness; but yet an interest in that satisfaction and righteousness is given as a reward of our obedience.

But this does not at all help the case; for this is to ascribe as much to our obedience as if we ascribed salvation to it directly, without the intervention of Christ's righteousness: For it would be as great a thing for God to give us Christ, and his satisfaction and righteousness, in reward for our obedience, as to give us heaven immediately; it would be as great a reward, and as great a testimony of respect to our obedience: And if God gives as great a thing as salvation for our obedience, why could he not as well give salvation itself directly? And then there would have been no need of Christ's righteousness. And indeed if God gives us Christ, or an interest in him, properly in reward of our obedience, he does really give us salvation in reward for our obedience: For the former implies the latter; yea it implies it, as the greater implies the less. So that indeed it exalts our virtue and obedience more, to suppose that God gives us Christ in reward of that virtue and obedience, than if he should give salvation without Christ.

The thing that the scripture guards and militates against, is our imagining that it is our own goodness, virtue, or excellency, that instates us in God's acceptance and favor. But to suppose that God gives us an interest in Christ in reward for our virtue, is as great an argument that it instates us in God's favor, as if he bestowed a title to eternal life as its direct reward. If God gives us an interest in Christ as a reward of our obedience, it will then follow, that we are instated in God's acceptance and favor by our own obedience, antecedent to our having an interest in Christ. For a rewarding any one's excellency, evermore supposes favor and and acceptance on the account of that excellency: It is the very notion of a reward, that it is a good thing, bestowed in testimony of respect and favor for the virtue or excellency rewarded. So that it is not by virtue of our interest in Christ and his mer-

its, that we first come into favor with God, according to this scheme; for we are in God's favor before we have any interest in those merits; in that we have an interest in those merits given as a fruit of God's favor for our own virtue. If our interest in Christ be the fruit of God's favor, then it cannot be the ground of it. If God did not accept us, and had no favor for us for our own excellency, he never would bestow so great a reward upon us, as a right in Christ's satisfaction and righteousness. So that such a scheme destroys itself; for it supposes that Christ's satisfaction and righteousness are necessary for us to recommend us to the favor of God; and yet supposes that we have God's favor and acceptance before we have Christ's satisfaction and righteousness, and have these given as a fruit of God's favor.

Indeed, neither salvation itself, nor Christ the Saviour, are given as a reward of any thing in man: They are not given as a reward of faith, nor any thing else of ours: We are not united to Christ as a reward of our faith, but have union with him by faith, only as faith is the very act of uniting or closing on our part. As when a man offers himself to a woman in marriage, he does not give himself to her as a reward of her receiving him in marriage: Her receiving him is not considered as a worthy deed in her, for which he rewards her by giving himself to her; but it is by her receiving him that the union is made, by which she hath him for her husband: It is on her part the unition itself. By these things it appears, how contrary to the scheme of the gospel of Christ their scheme is, who say that faith justifies as a principle of obedience, or as a leading act of obedience; or (as others) the sum and comprehension of all evangelical obedience or virtue that is in faith, that is the thing that gives it its justifying influence; and that is the same thing as to say, that we are justified by our own obedience, virtue, or goodness.

Having thus considered the evidence of the truth of the doctrine, I proceed now to the

III. Thing proposed, viz. "To shew in what sense the acts of a Christian life, or of evangelical obedience may be looked upon to be concerned in this affair.

From what has been said already, it is manifest that they cannot have any concern in this affair as good works, or by virtue of any moral goodness in them; not as works of the law, or as that moral excellency, or any part of it, that is the answering or fulfilment of that great and universal, and everlasting law or covenant of works that the great Lawgiver has established, as the highest and unalterable rule of judgment, which Christ alone answers, or does any thing towards it.

And it having been shewn, out of the scripture that it is only by faith, or the soul's receiving and uniting to the Saviour that has wrought our righteousness, that we are justified; it therefore remains, that the acts of a Christian life cannot be concerned in this affair any otherwise than as they imply, and are the expressions of faith, and may be looked upon as so many acts of reception of Christ the Saviour.

But the determining what concern acts of Christian obedience can have in justification in this respect, will depend on the resolving of another point, viz. Whether any other act of faith besides the first act, has any concern in our justification, or how far perseverance in faith, or the continued and renewed acts of faith, have influence in this affair.

And it seems manifest that justification is by the first act of faith, in some respects, in a peculiar manner, because a sinner is actually and finally justified as soon as he has performed one act of faith; and faith in its first act does, virtually at least, depend on God for perseverance, and entitles to this among other benefits. But yet the perseverance of faith is not excluded in this affair; it is not only certainly connected with justification, but it is not to be excluded from that on which the justification of a sinner has a dependence, or that by which he is justified.

I have shewn that the way in which justification has a dependence on faith, is that it is the qualification on which the congruity of an interest in the righteousness of Christ depends, or wherein such a fitness consists. But the consideration of the perseverance of faith cannot be excluded out of this congruity of an interest in Christ's righteousness, and so in the eternal benefits purchased by it, because faith is that by

which the soul hath union or oneness with Christ; and there is a natural congruity in it, that they that are one with Christ should have a joint interest with him in his eternal benefits; but yet this congruity depends on its being an abiding union. As it is needful that the branch should abide in the vine, in order to its receiving the lasting benefits of the root; so it is necessary that the soul should abide in Christ, in order to its receiving those lasting benefits of God's final acceptance and favor. "John xv. 6, 7. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Verse 9, 10. "Continue ye in my love. If ye keep (or abide) my commandments, ye shall abide in my love: Even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." There is the same reason why it is necessary that the union with Christ should remain, as why it should be begun; why it should continue to be, as why it should once be: If it should be begun without remaining, the beginning would be in vain. In order to the soul's being now in a justified state, and now free from condemnation, it is necessary that it should now be in Christ, and not only that it should once have been in him. Rom. viii. 1. "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." The soul is saved in Christ, as being now in him, when the salvation is bestowed, and not merely as remembering that it once was in him. Phil. iii. 9. "That I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." 1 John ii. 28. "And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming." In order to person's being blessed after death, it is necessary not only that they should once be in him, but that they should die in him. Rev. xiv. 13. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord."

And there is the same reason why faith, the uniting qualification, should remain, in order to the union's remaining; as why it should once be, in order to the union's once being.

So that although the sinner is actually and finally justified on the first act of faith, yet the perseverance of faith, even then, comes into consideration, as one thing on which the fitness of acceptance to life depends. God, in the act of justification, which is passed on a sinner's first believing, has respect to perseverance, as being virtually contained in that first act of faith; and it is looked upon, and taken by him that justifies, as being as it were a property in that faith that then is: God has respect to the believer's continuance in faith, and he is justified by that, as though it already were, because by divine establishment it shall follow; and it being by divine constitution connected with that first faith, as much, as if it were a property in it, it is then considered as such, and so justification is not suspended; but were it not for this, it would be needful that it should be suspended, till the sinner had actually persevered in faith.

And that it is so, that God in that act of final justification that he passes at the sinner's conversion, has respect to perseverance in faith, and future acts of faith, as being virtually implied in that first act, is further manifest by this, viz. That in a sinner's justification, at his conversion there is virtually contained a forgiveness as to eternal and deserved punishment, not only of all past sins, but also of all future infirmities and acts of sin that they shall be guilty of; because that first justification is decisive and final. And yet pardon, in the order of nature, properly follows the crime, and also follows those acts of repentance and faith that respect the crime pardoned, as is manifest both from reason and scripture. David, in the beginning of Psal. xxxii. speaks of the forgiveness of sins of his, that were doubtless committed long after he was first godly, as being consequent on those sins, and on his repentance and faith with respect to them; and yet this forgiveness is spoken of by the apostle in the 4th of Romans, as an instance of justification by faith. Probably the sin David there speaks of is the same that he committed in the matter of Uriah, and so the pardon the same with that release from death or eternal punishment, that the prophet Nathan speaks of. 2 Sam. xii. 13. "The Lord also hath put away

thy sin; thou shalt not die." Not only does the manifestation of this pardon follow the sin in the order of time, but the pardon itself, in the order of nature, follows David's repentance and faith with respect to this sin; for it is spoken of in the 32d Psalm, as depending on it.

But inasmuch as a sinner, in his first justification, is forever justified and freed from all obligation to eternal punishment; it hence of necessity follows, that future faith and repentance are beheld, in that justification, as virtually contained in that first faith and repentance; because repentance of those future sins, and faith in a Redeemer, with respect to them, or, at least, the continuance of that habit and principle in the heart that has such an actual repentance and faith in its nature and tendency, is now made sure by God's promise.

If remission of sins, committed after conversion, in the order of nature, follows that faith and repentance that is after them, then it follows that future sins are respected in the first justification, no otherwise than as future faith and repentance are respected in it. And future faith and repentance are looked upon by him that justifies, as virtually implied in the first repentance and faith, in the same manner as justification from future sins is virtually implied in the first justification; which is the thing that was to be proved.

And besides, if no other act of faith could be concerned in justification but the first act, it will then follow, that Christians ought never to seek justification by any other act of faith. For if justification is not to be obtained by after acts of faith, then surely it is not a duty to seek it by such acts: And so it can never be a duty for persons after they are once converted, by faith to seek to God, or believingly to look to him for the remission of sin, or deliverance from the guilt of it, because deliverance from the guilt of sin is part of what belongs to justification. And if it be not proper for converts by faith to look to God through Christ for it, then it will follow, that it is not proper for them to pray for it; Christian prayer to God for a blessing, is but an expression of faith in God for that blessing; prayer is only the voice of faith. But if these

things are so, it will follow that that petition of the Lord's prayer, *forgive us our debts*, is not proper to be put up by disciples of Christ, or to be used in Christian assemblies; and that Christ improperly directed his disciples to use that petition, when they were all of them except Judas, converted before. The debt that Christ directs his disciples to pray for the forgiveness of, can mean nothing else but the punishment that sin deserves, or the debt that we owe to divine justice, the ten thousand talents we owe our Lord. To pray that God would forgive our debts, is undoubtedly the same thing as to pray that God would release us from obligation to due punishment; but releasing from obligation to the punishment due to sin, and forgiving the debt that we owe to divine justice, is what appertains to justification.

And then to suppose that no after acts of faith are concerned in the business of justification, and so that it is not proper for any ever to seek justification by such acts, would be forever to cut off those Christians that are doubtful concerning their first act of faith, from the joy and peace of believing. As the business of a justifying faith is to obtain pardon and peace with God, by looking to God and trusting in him for these blessings; so the joy and peace of that faith are in the apprehension of pardon and peace obtained by such a trust. This a Christian that is doubtful of his first act of faith cannot have from that act, because by the supposition, he is doubtful whether it be an act of faith, and so whether he did obtain pardon and peace by that act. The proper remedy, in such a case, is now by faith to look to God in Christ for these blessings: But he is cut off from this remedy, because he is uncertain whether he has warrant so to do; for he does not know but that he has believed already; and if so, then he has no warrant to look to God by faith for these blessings now, because, by the supposition, no new act of faith is a proper means of obtaining these blessings. And so he can never properly obtain the joy of faith; for there are acts of true faith that are very weak acts, and the first act may be so as well as others: It may be like the first motion of the infant in the womb; it may be so weak an act, that the Christian, by examining it,

may never be able to determine whether it was a true act of faith or no; and it is evident from fact, and abundant experience, that many Christians are forever at a loss to determine which was their first act of faith. And those saints that have a good degree of satisfaction concerning their faith, may be subject to great declensions and falls, in which case they are liable to great fears of eternal punishment; and the proper way of deliverance, is to forsake their sin by repentance, and by faith now to come to Christ for deliverance from the deserved eternal punishment; but this it would not be, if deliverance from that punishment was not this way to be obtained.

But what is a still more plain and direct evidence of what I am now arguing for, is that that act of faith that Abraham exercised in the great promise of the covenant of grace that God made to him, of which it is expressly said, Gal. iii. 6. "It was accounted to him for righteousness," which is the grand instance and proof that the apostle so much insists upon, throughout the 4th chapter of Romans, and 3d of Galatians, to confirm his doctrine of justification by faith alone, was not Abraham's first act of faith, but was exerted long after he had by faith forsaken his own country, Heb. xi. 8, and had been treated as an eminent friend of God.

Moreover, the Apostle Paul, in the 3d chapter of Philippians, tells us how earnestly he sought justification by faith, or to win Christ and to obtain that righteousness which was by the faith of him, in what he did after his conversion. Ver. 8, 9. "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." And in the two next verses he expresses the same thing in other words, and tells us how he went through sufferings, and became conformable to Christ's death, that he might be a partaker with Christ in the benefit of his resurrection; which the same apostle elsewhere teaches us, is especially justification. Christ's resurrection was his justification; in this, he that was put to death

in the flesh, was justified by the spirit; and he that was delivered for our offences, rose again for our justification. And the apostle tells us in the verses that follow in that 3d chapter of Philippians, that he thus sought to attain the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, and so to partake of the benefit of his resurrection, still as though he had not already attained, but that he continued to follow after it.

On the whole it appears, that the perseverance of faith is necessary, even to the congruity of justification; and that not the less, because a sinner is justified, and perseverance promised, on the first act of faith, but God, in that justification, has respect, not only to the past act of faith, but to his own promise of future acts, and to the fitness of a qualification beheld as yet only in his own promise.

And that perseverance in faith is thus necessary to salvation, not merely as a *sine qua non*, or as an universal concomitant of it, but by reason of such an influence and dependence, seems manifest by many scriptures; I would mention two or three: Heb. iii. 6. "Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Verse 14: "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end." Chap. vi. 12. "Be ye followers of them, who through "faith and patience inherit the promises." Rom. xi. 20. "Well, because of unbelief they were broken off; but thou standest by faith. Be not high minded, but fear."

And as the congruity to a final justification depends on perseverance in faith, as well as the first act, so oftentimes the manifestation of justification in the conscience, arises a great deal more from after acts, than the first act. And all the difference whereby the first act of faith has a concern in this affair that is peculiar, seems to be, as it were, only an accidental difference, arising from the circumstance of time or it being first in order of time, and not from any peculiar respect that God has to it, or any influence it has of a peculiar nature, in the affair of our salvation.

And thus it is that a truly Christian walk, and the acts of an evangelical, childlike, believing obedience, are concerned in the affair of our justification, and seem to be sometimes

so spoken of in scripture, viz. as an expression of a persevering faith in the Son of God, the only Saviour. Faith unites to Christ, and so gives a congruity to justification, not merely as remaining a dormant principle in the heart, but as being and appearing in its active expressions.

The obedience of a Christian, so far as it is truly evangelical, and performed with the Spirit of the Son sent forth into the heart, has all relation to Christ, the Mediator, and is but an expression of the soul's believing unition to Christ. All evangelical works, are works of that faith that worketh by love; and every such act of obedience, wherein it is inward, and the act of the soul is only a new, effective act of reception of Christ, an adherence to the glorious Saviour. Hence that of the apostle, Gal. ii. 20. "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh, is by the faith of the Son of God." And hence we are directed, in whatever we do, whether in word or deed, to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Col. iii. 17.

And that God in justification has respect not only to the first act of faith, but also to future, persevering acts, in this sense, viz. as expressed in life, seems manifest, by Rom. ii. 17. "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: As it is written, The just shall live by faith." And Heb. x. 38, 39; "Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe, to the saving of the soul."

So that as was before said of faith, so may it be said of a childlike, believing obedience, it has no concern in justification by any virtue or excellency in it; but only as there is a reception of Christ in it. And this is no more contrary to the apostle's frequent assertion of our being justified without the works of the law, than to say, that we are justified by faith; for faith is as much a work, or act of Christian obedience, as the expressions of faith, in spiritual life and walk. And therefore, as we say that faith does not justify as a work, so we say of all these effective expressions of faith.

This is the reverse of the scheme of our modern divines, who hold, that faith justifies only as an act or expression of obedience; whereas, in truth obedience has no concern in justification, any otherwise than as an expression of faith.

I now proceed to the

IV. Thing proposed viz. "To answer objections."

Object. 1. We frequently find promises of eternal life and salvation, and sometimes of justification itself, made to our own virtue and obedience. Eternal life is promised to obedience, in Rom. ii. 7. "To them, who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, honor, and immortality; eternal life?" And the like in innumerable other places. And justification itself is promised to that virtue of a forgiving spirit and temper in us, Matth. vi. 14. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." All allow that justification in great part consists in the forgiveness of sins.

To this I answer,

1. These things being promised to our virtue and obedience, argues no more, than that there is a connexion between them and evangelical obedience; which, I have already observed, is not the thing in dispute. All that can be proved by obedience and salvation being connected in the promise, is, that obedience and salvation are connected in fact; which nobody denies; and whether it be owned or denied, is, as has been shewn, nothing to the purpose. There is no need that an admission to a title to salvation, should be given on the account of our obedience, in order to the promises being true. If we find such a promise, that he that obeys shall be saved, or he that is holy shall be justified; all that is needful in order to such promises being true, is, that it be really so, that he that obeys shall be saved, and that holiness and justification shall indeed go together. That proposition may be a truth, that he that obeys shall be saved; because obedience and salvation are connected together in fact; and yet an acceptance to a title to salvation not be granted upon the account of any of our own virtue or obedience. What is a prom-

ise, but only a declaration of future truth, for the comfort and encouragement of the person to whom it is declared? Promises are conditional propositions; and, as has been already observed, it is not the thing in dispute, whether other things besides faith may not have the place of the condition in such propositions wherein pardon and salvation are the consequent.

2. Promises may rationally be made to signs and evidences of faith, and yet the thing promised not be upon the account of the sign, but the thing signified. Thus, for instance, human government may rationally make promises of such and such privileges to those that can shew such evidences of their being free of such a city, or members of such a corporation, or descended of such a family; when it is not at all for the sake of that which is the evidence or sign, in itself considered, that they are admitted to such a privilege, but only and purely for the sake of that which it is an evidence of.

And though God does not stand in need of signs to know whether we have true faith or not, yet our own consciences do; so that it is much for our comfort that promises are made to signs of faith. A finding in ourselves a forgiving temper and disposition, may be a most proper and natural evidence to our consciences, that our hearts have, in a sense of our own utter unworthiness, truly closed and fallen in with the way of free and infinitely gracious forgiveness of our sins by Jesus Christ; whence we may be enabled, with the greater comfort, to apply to ourselves the promises of forgiveness by Christ.

3. It has been just now shown, how that acts of evangelical obedience are indeed concerned in our justification itself, and are not excluded from that condition that justification depends upon, without the least prejudice to that doctrine of justification by faith, without any goodness of our own, that has been maintained; and therefore it can be no objection against this doctrine, that we have sometimes in scripture promises of pardon and acceptance made to such acts of obedience.

4. Promises of particular benefits implied in justification and salvation, may especially be fitly made to such expressions

and evidences of faith as they have a peculiar natural likeness and suitableness to. As forgiveness is promised to a forgiving spirit in us; obtaining mercy is fitly promised to mercifulness in us, and the like: And that upon several accounts; they are the most natural evidences of our heart's closing with those benefits by faith; for they do especially shew the sweet accord and consent that there is between the heart and these benefits; and by reason of the natural likeness that there is between the virtue and the benefit, the one has the greater tendency to bring the other to mind; the practice of the virtue tends the more to renew the sense, and refresh the hope of the blessing promised: And also to convince the conscience of the justice of being denied the benefit, if the duty be neglected.

And besides the sense and manifestation of divine forgiveness in our own consciences; yea, and many exercises of God's forgiving mercy, as it respects God's fatherly displeasure, that are granted after justification, through the course of a Christian's life, may be given as the proper rewards of the virtue of a forgiving spirit, and yet this not be at all to the prejudice of the doctrine we have maintained; as will more fully appear, when we come to answer another objection hereafter to be mentioned.

Object. 2. Our own obedience and inherent holiness, is necessary to prepare men for heaven; and therefore is doubtless what recommends persons to God's acceptance, as the heirs of heaven.

To this I answer,

1. Our own obedience being necessary in order to a preparation for an actual bestowment of glory, is no argument that it is the thing upon the account of which we are accepted to a right to it. God may, and does do many things to prepare the saints for glory, after he has accepted them as the heirs of glory. A parent may do much in its education, to prepare a child for an inheritance after the child is an heir; yea, there are many things necessary to fit a child for the actual possession of the inheritance, that be not necessary in order to its having a right to the inheritance.

2. If every thing that is necessary to prepare men for glory must be the proper condition of justification, then perfect holiness is the condition of justification. Men must be made perfectly holy, before they are admitted to the enjoyment of the blessedness of heaven; for there must in no wise enter in there any spiritual defilement. And therefore, when a saint dies he leaves all his sin and corruption when he leaves the body.

Object. 3. Our obedience is not only indissolubly connected with salvation, and preparatory to it, but the Scripture expressly speaks of bestowing eternal blessings as rewards for the good deeds of the saints. Matth. x. 42. "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, he shall in no wise lose his reward." 1 Cor. iii. 8. "Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labor." And in many other places. This seems to militate against the doctrine that has been maintained, two ways: 1. The bestowing a reward, carries in it a respect to a moral fitness, in the thing rewarded, to the reward; the very notion of a reward being a benefit bestowed in testimony of acceptance of, and respect to, the goodness or amiableness of some qualification or work in the person rewarded. And besides, the scripture seems to explain itself in this matter, in Rev. iii. 4. Thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments: And they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy." This is here given as the reason why they should have such a reward, "because they were worthy;" which, though we suppose it to imply no proper merit, yet it at least implies a moral fitness, or that the excellency of their virtue in God's sight recommends them to such a reward; which seems directly repugnant to what has been supposed, viz. That we are accepted, and approved of God, as the heirs of salvation, not out of regard to the excellency of our own virtue or goodness, or any moral fitness therein to such a reward, but on the account of the dignity and moral fitness of Christ's righteousness. 2. Our being eternally rewarded for our own holiness and good works, necessarily supposes that our future happiness will be greater or smaller, in some propor-

tion as our own holiness and obedience are more or less; and that there are different degrees of glory, according to different degrees of virtue and good works, is a doctrine very expressly and frequently taught us in scripture. But this seems quite inconsistent with the saints' all having their future blessedness as a reward of Christ's righteousness: For if Christ's righteousness be imputed to all, and this be what entitles each one to glory, then it is the same righteousness that entitles one to glory which entitles another. But if all have glory as the reward of the same righteousness why have not all the same glory? Does not the same righteousness merit as much glory when imputed to one as when imputed to another?

In answer to the *first* part of this objection, I would observe, that it does not argue that we are justified by our good deeds, that we shall have eternal blessings in reward for them, for it is in consequence of our justification, that our good deeds become rewardable with spiritual and eternal rewards. The acceptableness, and so the rewardableness of our virtue, is not antecedent to justification, but follows it, and is built entirely upon it; which is the reverse of what those in the adverse scheme of justification suppose, viz. that justification is built on the acceptableness and rewardableness of our virtue. They suppose that a saving interest in Christ is given as a reward of our virtue, or, (which is the same thing) as a testimony of God's acceptance of our excellency in our virtue. But the contrary is true, that God's respect to our virtue as our amiableness in his sight, and his acceptance of it as rewardable, are entirely built on our interest in Christ already established. So that that relation to Christ, whereby believers, in scripture language, are said to be in Christ, is the very foundation of our virtues and good deeds being accepted of God, and so of their being rewarded; for a reward is a testimony of acceptance. For we, and all that we do, are accepted only in the beloved, Eph. i. 6. Our sacrifices are acceptable, only through our interest in him, and through his worthiness and preciousness being as it were, made ours. 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5. "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. Ye also as lively

stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Here a being actually built on this stone, precious to God, is mentioned as all the ground of the acceptableness of our good works to God, and their becoming also precious in his eyes. So, Heb. xiii. 21. "Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ." And hence we are directed, whatever we offer to God, to offer it in Christ's name, as expecting to have it accepted no other way, than from the value that God has to that name. Col. iii. 17. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." To act in Christ's name, is to act under him, as our head, and as having him to stand for us, and represent us God ward.

The reason of this may be seen, from what has been already said, to shew that it is not meet that any thing in us should be accepted of God as any excellency of our persons, until we are actually in Christ, and justified through him. The loveliness of the virtue of the fallen creatures is nothing in the sight of God, till he beholds them in Christ, and clothed with his righteousness. 1. Because till then we stand condemned before God, by his own holy law, to his utter rejection and abhorrence. And, 2. Because we are infinitely guilty before him; and the loveliness of our virtue bears no proportion to our guilt, and must therefore pass for nothing before a strict judge. And 3. Because our good deeds and virtuous acts themselves are in a sense corrupt; and the hatefulness of the corruption of them, if we are beheld as we are in ourselves, or separate from Christ, infinitely outweighs the loveliness of that which attends the act of virtue itself, the loveliness vanishes into nothing in comparison of it: And therefore the virtue must pass for nothing, out of Christ. Not only are our best duties defiled, in being attended with the exercises of sin and corruption, that precede them, and follow them, and are intermingled with holy acts; but even the holy acts themselves, and the gracious exercises of the godly, though the act most

simply considered is good, yet take the acts in their measure and dimensions, and the manner in which they are exerted, and they are corrupt acts; that is, they are defectively corrupt, or sinfully defective; there is that defect in them that may well be called the corruption of them. That defect is properly sin, an expression of a vile sinfulness of heart, and what tends to provoke the just anger of God; not because the exercise of love and other grace is not equal to God's loveliness; for it is impossible the love of creatures (men or angels) should be so; but because the act is so very disproportionate to the occasion given for love or other grace, considering God's loveliness, and the manifestation that is made of it, and the exercises of kindness, and the capacity of human nature, and our advantages (and the like) together. A negative expression of corruption may be as truly sin, and as just cause of provocation, as a positive. Thus if a man, a worthy and excellent person, should, from mere generosity and goodness, exceedingly lay out himself, and should, with great expense and suffering, save another's life or redeem him from some extreme calamity; and when he had done all, that other person should never thank him for it, or express the least gratitude any way; this would be a negative expression of his ingratitude, and baseness; but is equivalent to an act of ingratitude or positive exercise of a base, unworthy spirit; and is truly an expression of it, and brings as much blame, as if he, by some positive act, had much injured another person. And so it would be, (only in a less degree) if the gratitude was but very small, bearing no proportion to the benefit and obligation; as if, for so great and extraordinary a kindness, he should express no more gratitude than would have been becoming towards a person that had only given him a cup of water when thirsty, or shewn him the way in a journey when at a loss, or had done him some such small kindness: If he should come to his benefactor to express his gratitude, and should do after this manner, he might truly be said to act unworthily and odiously; he would show a most ungrateful spirit: And his doing after such a manner might justly be abhorred by all: And yet the gratitude, that little there is of it, most simply consid-

evil, and so far as it goes is good. And so it is with respect to our exercise of love, and gratitude, and other graces, towards God: They are defectively corrupt and sinful, and take them as they are, in their manner and measure, might justly be odious and provoking to God, and would necessarily be so, were we beheld out of Christ: For in that this defect is sin, it is infinitely hateful; and so the hatefulness of the very act infinitely outweighs the loveliness of it; because all sin has infinite hatefulness and heinousness; but our holiness has but little value and loveliness, as has been elsewhere demonstrated.

Hence, though it be true that the saints are rewarded for their good works yet it is for Christ's sake only, and not for the excellency of their works in themselves considered, or beheld separately from Christ; for so they have no excellency in God's sight, or acceptableness to him, as has now been shewn. It is acknowledged that God, in rewarding the holiness and good works of believers, does in some respect, give them happiness as a testimony of his respect to the loveliness of their holiness and good works in his sight; for that is the very notion of a reward: But in a very different sense from what would have been, if man had not fallen; which would have been to bestow eternal life on man, as a testimony of God's respect to the loveliness of what man did, considered as in itself, and as in man, separately by himself, and not beheld as a member of Christ: In which sense also, the scheme of justification we are opposing necessarily supposes the excellency of our virtue to be respected and rewarded; for it supposes a saving interest in Christ itself to be given as a reward of it.

Two things come to pass, relating to the saints' reward of their inherent righteousness, by virtue of their relation to Christ. 1. The guilt of their persons is all done away, and the pollution and hatefulness that attend their good works are hid. 2. Their relation to Christ adds a positive value and dignity to their good works in God's sight. That little holiness, and those faint and feeble acts of love, and other grace, receive an exceeding value in the sight of God, by virtue

of God's beholding them as in Christ, and as it were members of one so infinitely worthy in his eyes; and that because God looks upon their persons as persons of greater dignity on this account. Isa. xliii. 4. "Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable." God for Christ's sake, and because they are members of his own righteous and dear Son, sets an exceeding value upon their persons; and hence it follows, that he also sets a great value upon their good acts and offerings. The same love and obedience in a person of greater dignity and value in God's sight is more valuable in his eyes than in one of less dignity. Love and respect (as has been before observed) are valuable in proportion to the dignity of the person whose love it is; because, so far as any one gives his love to another, he gives himself, in that he gives his heart: But this is a more excellent offering, in proportion as the person whose self is offered is more worthy. Believers are become immensely more honorable in God's esteem by virtue of their relation to Christ, than man would have been, considered as by himself, though he had been free from sin; as a mean person becomes more honorable when married to a king. Hence God will probably reward the little weak, love, and poor and exceedingly imperfect obedience of believers in Christ, with a more glorious reward than he would have done Adam's perfect obedience. According to the tenor of the first covenant, the person was to be accepted and rewarded, only for the work's sake; but by the covenant of grace, the work is accepted and rewarded, only for the person's sake; the person being beheld antecedently as a member of Christ, and clothed with his righteousness. So that though the saints' inherent holiness is rewarded, yet this very reward is indeed not the less founded on the worthiness and righteousness of Christ: None of the value that their works have in his sight, nor any of the acceptance they have with him, is out of Christ, and out of his righteousness; but his worthiness as Mediator is the prime and only foundation on which all is built, and the universal source whence all arises. God indeed doth great things out of regard to the saints' loveliness, but it is only as a secondary and derivative loveliness, as it were. When I

speak of a derivative loveliness, I do not mean only, that the qualifications themselves that are accepted as lovely, are derived from Christ, and are from his power and purchase; but that the acceptance of them as a loveliness, and all the value that is set upon them, and all their connexion with the reward, is founded in, and derived from Christ's righteousness and worthiness.

If we suppose that not only higher degrees of glory in heaven, but heaven itself, is in some respect given in reward for the holiness and good works of the saints, in this secondary and derivative sense, it will not prejudice the doctrine we have maintained. It is no way impossible that God may bestow heaven's glory wholly out of respect to Christ's righteousness, and yet in reward for man's inherent holiness, in different respects, and different ways. It may be only Christ's righteousness that God has respect to, for his own sake, the independent acceptableness and dignity of it, being sufficient of itself to recommend all that believe in Christ to a title to this glory; and so it may be only by this, that persons enter into a title to heaven, or have their prime right to it: And yet God may also have respect to the saints' own holiness, for Christ's sake, and as deriving a value from Christ's merit, which he may testify in bestowing heaven upon them. The saints being beheld as members of Christ, their obedience is looked upon by God as something of Christ's, it being the obedience of the members of Christ, and their sufferings are looked upon, in some respect, as the sufferings of Christ. Hence the apostle, speaking of his sufferings, says, Col. i. 24. "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh." To the same purpose is Matth. xxv. 35. &c. I was an hungred, naked, sick, and in prison, &c. And so that in Rev. xi. 8. "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."

By the merit and righteousness of Christ, such favor of God towards believers, may be obtained as that God, may hereby be already, as it were, disposed to make them

perfectly and eternally happy. But yet this does not hinder, but that God in his wisdom may choose to bestow this perfect and eternal happiness in this way, viz. in some respect as a reward of their holiness and obedience: It is not impossible but that the blessedness may be bestowed as a reward for that which is done, after that an interest is already obtained in that favor which (to speak of God after the manner of men) disposes God to bestow the blessedness. Our heavenly Father may already have that favor for a child, whereby he may be thoroughly ready to give the child an inheritance, because he is his child; which he is by the purchase of Christ's righteousness: And yet that does not hinder but that it should be possible, that the Father may choose to bestow the inheritance on the child, in a way of reward for his dutifulness, and behaving as becoming a child. And so great and exceeding a reward may not be judged more than a meet reward for his dutifulness; but that so great a reward is judged meet, does not arise from the excellency of the obedience absolutely considered, but from his standing in so near and honorable a relation to God, as that of a child, which is obtained only by the righteousness of Christ. And thus the reward, arises properly from the righteousness of Christ; though it be indeed in some sort the reward of their obedience. As a father might justly esteem the inheritance no more than a meet reward for the obedience of his child, and yet esteem it more than a meet reward for the obedience of a servant. The favor whence a believer's heavenly Father bestows the eternal inheritance, and his title as an heir, are founded in that relation he stands in to him as a child, purchased by Christ's righteousness; though he in wisdom chooses to bestow it in such a way, as therein to testify his acceptance of the amiableness of his own obedience in Christ.

Believers having a title to heaven by faith, antecedent to their obedience, or its being absolutely promised to them before, does not hinder but that the actual bestowment of heaven may also be a testimony of God's regard to their obedience, though performed afterwards. Thus it was with Abraham, the father and pattern of all believers: God bestowed upon

him that blessing of multiplying his seed as the stars of heaven, and causing that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, in reward for his obedience in offering up his son Isaac, Gen. xxii. 16....18. "And said, by myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." And yet the very same blessings had been from time to time promised to Abraham, in the most positive terms, and the promise, with great solemnity, confirmed and sealed to him; as chap. xii. 2, 3. chap. xiii. 16. chap. xv. 1.....7. &c. chap. xvii. throughout; chap. xviii. 10. 18.

From what has been said we may easily solve the difficulty arising from that text in Rev. iii. 4. "They shall walk with me in white for they are worthy;" which is parallel with that text in Luke xx. 35. "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead." I allow (as in the objection) that this worthiness does doubtless denote a moral fitness to the reward, or that God looks on these glorious benefits as a meet testimony of his regard to the value which their persons and performances have in his sight.

1. God looks on these glorious benefits as a meet testimony of his regard to the value which their persons have in his sight. But he sets this value upon their persons purely for Christ's sake: They are such jewels, and have such preciousness in his eyes, only because they are beheld in Christ, and by reason of the worthiness of the head they are the members of, and the stock they are grafted into. And this value that God sets upon them on this account is so great, that God thinks meet, from regard to it, to admit them to such exceeding glory. The saints, on the account of their relation to Christ, are such precious jewels in God's sight, that they are thought worthy of a place in his own crown. Mal. iii. 17.

Zech. iv. 16. So far as the saints are said to be valuable in God's sight, upon whatever account they are so, so far may they properly be said to be worthy, or meet for that honor that is answerable to that value or price which God sets upon them. A child or wife of a prince is worthy to be treated with great honor; and therefore if a mean person should be adopted to be a child of a prince, or should be espoused to a prince, it would be proper to say, that she was worthy of such an honor and respect, and there would be no force upon the words in saying, that she ought to have such respect paid her for she is worthy, though it be only on the account of her relation to the prince that she is so.

2. From the value God sets upon their persons, for the sake of Christ's worthiness, he also sets a high value on their virtue and performances. Their meek and quiet spirit is of great price in his sight. Their fruits are pleasant fruits, their offerings are an odour of sweet smell to him; and that because of the value he sets on their persons, as has been already observed and explained. This preciousness or high valuableness of believers is a moral fitness to a reward; and yet this valuableness is all in the righteousness of Christ, that is the foundation of it. The thing that respect is had to, is not the excellency that is in them separately by themselves, or in their virtue by itself, but to the value that in God's account arises thereto on other considerations; which is the natural import of the manner of expression in Luke xx. 35. "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world," &c. and Luke xxi. 36, "That ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man". 2 Thess. i. 5. "That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer."

There is a vast difference between this scheme, and what is supposed in the scheme of those that oppose the doctrine of justification by faith alone. This lays the foundation of first acceptance with God, and all actual salvation consequent upon it, wholly in Christ and his righteousness. On the contrary, in their scheme a regard to man's own excellency or

virtue is supposed to be first, and to have the place of the first foundation in actual salvation, though not in that ineffectual redemption, which they suppose common to all: They lay the foundation of all discriminating salvation in man's own virtue and moral excellency: This is the very bottom stone in this affair; for they suppose that it is from regard to our virtue, that even a special interest in Christ itself is given. The foundation being thus contrary, the whole scheme becomes exceeding diverse and contrary; the one scheme is an evangelical one, the other a legal one; the one is utterly inconsistent with our being justified by Christ's righteousness, the other not at all.

From what has been said, we may understand what has been before mentioned, viz. How that not only is that forgiveness of sin that is granted in justification indissolubly connected with a forgiving spirit in us, but there may be many exercises of forgiving mercy that may properly be granted in reward for our forgiving those that trespass against us: For none will deny but that there are many acts of divine forgiveness towards the saints, that do not presuppose an unjustified state immediately preceding that forgiveness. None will deny, that saints that never fell from grace or a justified state, do yet commit many sins which God forgives afterwards, by laying aside his fatherly displeasure. This forgiveness may be in reward for our forgiveness, without any prejudice to the doctrine that has been maintained, as well as other mercies and blessings consequent on justification.

With respect to the *second* part of the objection, that relates to the different degrees of glory, and the seeming inconsistence there is in it, that the degrees of glory in different saints should be greater or less according to their inherent holiness and good works, and yet, that every one's glory should be purchased with the price of the very same imputed righteousness.

I answer, that Christ, by his righteousness, purchased for every one complete and perfect happiness, according to his capacity. But this does not hinder but that the saints, being of various capacities, may have various degrees of happiness,

and yet all their happiness be the fruit of Christ's purchase. Indeed it cannot be properly said that Christ purchased any particular degree of happiness, so that the value of Christ's righteousness in the sight of God, is sufficient to raise a believer so high in happiness, and no higher, and so that if the believer were made happier, it would exceed the value of Christ's righteousness; but in general, Christ purchased eternal life or perfect happiness for all, according to their several capacities. The saints are as so many vessels of different sizes, cast into a sea of happiness, where every vessel is full; this Christ purchased for all: Yet it is left to God's sovereign pleasure to determine the largeness of the vessel; Christ's righteousness meddles not with this matter. Eph. iv. 4....7. "There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism," &c. "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." God may dispense in this matter according to what rule he pleases, not the less for what Christ has done: He may dispense either without condition, or upon what condition he pleases to fix. It is evident that Christ's righteousness meddles not with this matter; for what Christ did was to fulfil the covenant of works; but the covenant of works did not meddle at all with this: If Adam had persevered in perfect obedience, he and his posterity would have had perfect and full happiness; every one's happiness would have so answered his capacity, that he would have been completely blessed; but God would have been at liberty to have made some of one capacity, and others of another, as he pleased. The angels have obtained eternal life, or a state of confirmed glory, by a covenant of works, whose condition was perfect obedience; but yet some are higher in glory than others, according to the several capacities that God, according to his sovereign pleasure, hath given them. So that it being still left with God notwithstanding the perfect obedience of the second Adam, to fix the degree of each one's capacity by what rule he pleases, he hath been pleased to fix the degree of capacity, and so of glory, by the proportion of the saints' grace and fruitfulness here: He gives higher degrees of glory, in reward

for higher degrees of holiness and good works, because it pleases him ; and yet all the happiness of each saint is indeed the fruit of the purchase of Christ's obedience. If it had been but one man that Christ had obeyed and died for, and it had pleased God to make him of a very large capacity, Christ's perfect obedience would have purchased that his capacity should be filled and then all his happiness might properly be said to be the fruit of Christ's perfect obedience ; though if he had been of a less capacity, he would not have had so much happiness by the same obedience ; and yet would have had as much as Christ merited for him. Christ's righteousness meddles not with the degree of happiness, any otherwise than as he merits that it should be full and perfect, according to the capacity ; And so it may be said to be concerned in the degree of happiness, as perfect is a degree with respect to imperfect ; but it meddles not with degrees of perfect happiness.

This matter may be yet better understood, if we consider that Christ and the whole church of saints are, as it were, one body, of which he is the Head, and they members, of different place and capacity : Now the whole body, head, and members, have communion in Christ's righteousness ; they are all partakers of the benefit of it ; Christ himself the head is rewarded for it, and every member is partaker of the benefit and reward : But it does by no means follow, that every part should equally partake of the benefit, but every part in proportion to its place and capacity ; the head partakes of far more than other parts, because it is of a far greater capacity ; and the more noble members partake of more than the inferior. As it is in a natural body that enjoys perfect health, the head, and the heart, and lungs, have a greater share of this health, they have it more seated in them, than the hands and feet, because they are parts of greater capacity ; though the hands and feet are as much in perfect health as those nobler parts of the body : So it is in the mystical body of Christ, all the members are partakers of the benefit of the righteousness of the head ; but it is according to the different capacity and place they have in the body ; and God determines that place

and capacity as he pleases; he makes whom he pleases the foot, and whom he pleases the hand, and whom he pleases the lungs, &c. 1 Cor. xii. 18. "God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." And God efficaciously determines the place and capacity of every member, by the different degrees of grace and assistance in the improvement of it here in this world: Those that he intends for the highest place in the body, he gives them most of his Spirit, the greatest share of the divine nature, the Spirit and nature of Christ Jesus the head, and that assistance whereby they perform the most excellent works, and do most abound in them.

Object. 4. It may be objected against what has been supposed, viz. That rewards are given to our good works, only in consequence of an interest in Christ, or in testimony of God's respect to the excellency or value of them in his sight, as built on an interest in Christ's righteousness already obtained: That the Scripture speaks of an interest in Christ itself, as being given out of respect to our moral fitness. Matth. x. 37.....39. "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: He that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me: He that taketh not up his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life, shall lose it," &c. Worthiness here, at least signifies a moral fitness, or an excellency or virtue that recommends: And this place seems to intimate as though it were from respect to a moral fitness that men are admitted even to an union with Christ, and interest in him; and therefore this worthiness cannot be consequent on being in Christ, and by the imputation of his worthiness, or from any value that is in us, or in our actions in God's sight, as beheld in Christ.

To this I answer, That though persons when they are accepted, are not accepted as worthy, yet when they are rejected they are rejected as unworthy. He that does not love Christ above other things, that treats him with such indignity, as to set him below earthly things, shall be treated as unworthy of Christ; his unworthiness of Christ, especially in that particular, shall be marked against him, and

imputed to him: And though he be a professing Christian, and live in the enjoyment of the gospel, and has been visibly ingrafted into Christ, and admitted as one of his disciples, as Judas was; yet he shall be thrust out in wrath, as a punishment of his vile treatment of Christ. The forementioned words do not imply, that if a man does love Christ above father and mother, &c. That he should be worthy; the most they imply is, that such a visible Christian shall be treated and thrust out as unworthy. He that believes is not received for the worthiness or moral fitness of faith; but yet the visible Christian is cast out by God, for the unworthiness and moral unfitness of unbelief. A being accepted as one of Christ's, is not the reward of believing; but being thrust out from being one of Christ's disciples, after a visible admission as such, is properly a punishment of unbelief. John iii. 18, 19. He that believeth on him, is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Salvation is promised to faith as a free gift, but damnation is threatened to unbelief as a debt, or punishment due to unbelief. They that believed in the wilderness did not enter into Canaan, because of the worthiness of their faith; but God sware in his wrath, that they that believed not should not enter in, because of the unworthiness of their unbelief. The admitting a soul to an union with Christ is an act of free and sovereign grace; but an excluding at death, and at the day of judgment, those professors of Christianity that have had the offers of a Saviour and enjoyed great privileges as God's people, is a judicial proceeding, and a just punishment of their unworthy treatment of Christ. The design of this saying of Christ is to make men sensible of the unworthiness of their treatment of Christ, that professed him to be their Lord and Saviour, and set him below father and mother, &c. and not to persuade of the worthiness of loving him above father and mother. If a beggar should be offered any great and precious gift, but as soon as offered, should trample it under his feet, it might be

taken from him, as unworthy to have it: Or if a malefactor should have his pardon offered him, that he might be freed from execution, and should only scoff at it, his pardon might be refused him, as unworthy of it; though if he had received it, he would not have had it for his worthiness, or as being recommended to it by his virtue; for his being a malefactor supposes him unworthy, and its being offered him to have it only on accepting, supposes that the king looks for no worthiness, nothing in him for which he should bestow pardon as a reward. This may teach us how to understand Acts xiii. 46. "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken unto you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo we turn to the Gentiles."

Object. 5. It is objected against the doctrine of justification by faith alone, That repentance is evidently spoken of in Scripture as that which is in a special manner the condition of remission of sins: But remission of sins is by all allowed to be that wherein justification does (at least) in great part consist.

But it must certainly arise from a misunderstanding of what the Scripture says about repentance, to suppose that faith and repentance are two distinct things, that in like manner are the conditions of justification. For it is most plain from the Scripture, that the condition of justification, or that in us by which we are justified, is but one, and that is faith. Faith and repentance are not two distinct conditions of justification, nor are they two distinct things that together make one condition of justification; but faith comprehends the whole of that by which we are justified, or by which we come to have an interest in Christ, and nothing else has a parallel concern with it in the affair of our salvation. And this the divines on the other side themselves are sensible of, and therefore they suppose that that faith that the Apostle Paul speaks of, which he says we are justified by alone, comprehends in it repentance.

And therefore, in answer to the objection, I would say, That when repentance is spoken of in scripture as the condition of pardon, thereby is not intended any particular grace, or

act properly distinct from faith, that has a parallel influence with it in the affair of our pardon or justification; but by repentance is intended nothing distinct from active conversion, (or conversion actively considered) as it respects the term from which. Active conversion is a motion or exercise of that mind that respects two terms, viz. sin and God: And by repentance is meant this conversion, or active change of the mind, so far as it is conversant about the term from which, or about sin. This is what the word *repentance* properly signifies; which, in the original of the New Testament, is μετανοια which signifies *a change of the mind*, or which is the same thing, the turning or the conversion of the mind. Repentance is this turning, as it respects what is turned from. Acts xxvi. 20. "Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I shewed unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, and turn to God." Both these are the same turning, but only with respect to opposite terms: In the former, is expressed the exercise of mind that there is about sin in this turning; in the other, the exercise of mind towards God.

If we look over the scriptures that speak of evangelical repentance, we shall presently see that repentance is to be understood in this sense; as Matth. ix. 13. "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Luke xiii. 3. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." And chap. xv. 7, 10. "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth," i. e. over one sinner that is converted. Acts xi. 18. "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." This is said by the Christians of the circumcision at Jerusalem, upon Peter's giving an account of the conversion of Cornelius and his family, and their embracing the gospel, though Peter had said nothing expressly about their sorrow for sin. And again, Acts xvii. 30. "But now commandeth all men every where to repent." And Luke xvi. 30. "Nay, father Abraham, but if one went to them from the dead they would repent." 2 Pet. iii. 9. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long suffering to usward, not willing that any

should perish, but that all should come to repentance." It is plain that in these and other places, by repentance is meant conversion.

Now, it is true, that conversion is the condition of pardon and justification: But if it be so, how absurd is it to say, that conversion is one condition of justification, and faith another, as though they were distributively distinct and parallel conditions! Conversion is the condition of justification, because it is that great change by which we are brought from sin to Christ, and by which we become believers in him: Agreeable to Matth. xxi. 32. "And ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him." When we are directed to repent, that our sins may be blotted out, it is as much as to say, let your minds and hearts be changed, that your sins may be blotted out. But if it be said, let your hearts be changed, that you may be justified; and also said, believe that you may be justified; does it therefore follow, that the heart's being changed is one condition of justification, and believing another? But our minds must be changed, that we may believe, and so may be justified.

And besides, evangelical repentance, being active conversion, is not to be treated of as a particular grace, properly and entirely distinct from faith, as by some it seems to have been. What is conversion, but the sinful, alienated soul's closing with Christ, or the sinner's being brought to believe in Christ? That exercise of soul that there is in conversion, that respects sin, cannot be excluded out of the nature of faith in Christ: There is something in faith, or closing with Christ that respects sin, and that is evengelical repentance. That repentance which in scripture is called repentance for the remission of sins, is that very principle or operation of the mind itself that is called faith, so far as it is conversant about sin. Justifying faith in a Mediator is conversant about two things: It is conversant about sin or evil to be rejected and to be delivered from by the Mediator, and about positive good to be accepted and obtained by the Mediator; as conversant about the former of these it is evangelical repentance, or repentance for remission of sins. Surely they must be very igno-

sent, or at least very inconsiderate of the whole tenor of the gospel, that think that that repentance by which remission of sins is obtained, can be completed, as to all that is essential to it, without any respect to Christ, or application of the mind to the Mediator, who alone has made atonement for sin. Surely so great a part of salvation as remission of sins, is not to be obtained without looking or coming to the great and only Saviour. It is true, repentance, in its more general, abstracted nature, is only a sorrow for sin and forsaking of it, which is a duty of natural religion; but evangelical repentance, or repentance for remission of sins, hath more than this essential to it; a dependance of soul on the Mediator for deliverance from sin, is of the essence of it.

That justifying repentance has the nature of faith, seems evident by Acts xix. 4. "Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." The latter words, "saying unto the people, that they should believe on him &c. are evidently exegetical of the former, and explain how he preached repentance for the remission of sin. When it is said, that he preached repentance for the remission of sin, saying, that they should believe on Christ, cannot be supposed but that it is intended this saying, that they should believe in Christ, was as directing them what to do that they might obtain the remission of sins. So, 2 Tim. ii. 25. "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." Tha acknowledging of the truth which there is in believing, is here spoken of as what is attained in repentance. And on the other hand, that faith includes repentance in its nature, is evident by the apostle's speaking of sin as destroyed in faith, Gal. ii. 18. In the preceding verses the apostle mentions an objection against the doctrine of justification by faith alone, viz. that it tends to encourage men in sin, and so to make Christ the minister of sin. This objection he rejects and refutes with this, "If I build again the things that

I had destroyed, I make myself a transgressor." If sin be destroyed by faith, it must be by repentance of sin included in it; for we know that it is our repentance of sin, or the μετανοια or turning of the mind from sin, that is our destroying our sin.

That in justifying faith that directly respects sin, or the evil to be delivered from by the Mediator, is as follows: A sense of our own sinfulness, and the hatefulness of it and an hearty acknowledgment of its desert of the threatened punishment, looking to the free mercy of God in a Redeemer, for deliverance from it and its punishment.

Concerning this here described, three things may be noted, 1. That it is the very same with that evangelical repentance to which remission of sins is promised in scripture. 2. That it is all of it of the essence of justifying faith, and is the same with that faith, so far as it is conversant about the evil to be delivered from by the Mediator. 3. That this is indeed the proper and peculiar condition of remission of sins.

1. All of it is essential to evangelical repentance, and is indeed the very thing meant by that repentance, to which remission of sins is promised in the gospel. As to the former part of the description, viz. a sense of our own sinfulness, and the hatefulness of it, and an hearty acknowledgment of its desert of wrath, none will deny it to be included in repentance: But this does not comprehend the whole essence of evangelical repentance; but what follows does also properly and essentially belong to its nature, looking to the free mercy of God in a Redeemer, for deliverance from it, and from the punishment of it. That repentance to which remission is promised, not only always has this with it, but it is contained in it, as what is of the proper nature and essence of it: And respect is ever had to this in the nature of repentance, whenever remission is promised to it; and it is especially from respect to this in the nature of repentance, that it has that promise made to it. If this latter part be missing, it fails of the nature of that evangelical repentance to which remission of sins is promised. If repentance remains in sorrow for sin, and does not reach to a looking to the free mercy of God in Christ for pardon, it is not that which is the condition of par-

don, neither shall pardon be obtained by it. Evangelical repentance is an humiliation for sin before God; but the sinner never comes and humbles himself before God in any other repentance, but that which includes an hoping in his mercy for remission: If his sorrow be not accompanied with that, there will be no coming to God in it, but a flying further from him. There is some worship of God in justifying repentance; but that there is not in any other repentance, but that which has a sense of, and faith in the divine mercy to forgive sin; Psalm cxxx. 4. "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." The promise of mercy to a true penitent, in Prov. xxviii. 13, is expressed in these terms. "Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall have mercy." But there is faith in God's mercy in that confessing. The Psalmist, in Psalm xxxii. speaking of the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered, to whom the Lord imputes not sin, says, that he acknowledged his sin unto God, his iniquity he did not hide; he said he would confess his trangression to the Lord, and then God forgave the iniquity of his sin. The manner of expression plainly holds forth, that then while he kept silence his bones waxed old, but then he began to encourage himself in the mercy of God, when before his bones waxed old, while he kept silence; and therefore the Apostle Paul, in the 4th of Romans, brings this instance to confirm the doctrine of justification by faith alone that he had been insisting on. When sin is aright confessed to God, there is always faith in that act: That confessing of sin that is joined with despair such as was in Judas, is not the confession to which the promise is made. In Acts ii. 38, the direction that was given to those that were pricked in their heart with a sense of the guilt of sin, was to repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins. A being baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of sins, implied faith in Christ for the remission of sins. Repentance for the remission of sins was typified of old by the priest's confessing the sins of the people over the scape goat, laying his hands on him, Lev. xvi. 21, denoting that it is that repent-

ance and confession of sin only that obtains remission, that is made over the scape goat, over Christ, the great sacrifice, and with dependance on him. Many other things might be produced from the scripture, that do in like manner confirm this point; but these may be sufficient.

2. All the forementioned description is of the essence of justifying faith, and not different from it, so far as it is conversant about sin, or the evil to be delivered from by the Mediator. For it is doubtless of the essence of justifying faith, to embrace Christ as a Saviour from sin and its punishment; and all that is contained in that act is contained in the nature of faith itself: But in the act of embracing Christ as a Saviour from our sin and its punishment, is implied a sense of our sinfulness, and a hatred of our sins, or a rejecting them with abhorrence, and a sense of our desert of their punishment. An embracing Christ as a Saviour from sin, implies the contrary act towards sin, viz. rejecting of sin. If we fly to the light to be delivered from darkness, the same is contrary towards darkness, viz. a rejecting of it. In proportion to the earnestness or appetite with which we embrace Christ as a Saviour from sin, in the same proportion is the abhorrence with which we reject sin, in the same act. Yea, if we suppose there to be in the nature of faith as conversant about sin, no more than the hearty embracing Christ as a Saviour from the punishment of sin, this act will imply in it the whole of the abovementioned description. It implies a sense of our own sinfulness. Certainly in the hearty embracing a Saviour from the punishment of our sinfulness, there is the exercise of a sense of our sinfulness, or that we be sinful: We cannot heartily embrace Christ as a Saviour from the punishment of that which we are not sensible we are guilty of. There is also in the same act, a sense of our desert of the threatened punishment: We cannot heartily embrace Christ as a Saviour from that which we be not sensible that we have deserved: For if we are not sensible that we have deserved the punishment, we shall not be sensible that we have any need of a Saviour from it, or, at least shall not be convinced but that the God that offers the Saviour, unjustly

makes him needful; and we cannot heartily embrace such an offer. And further, there is implied in a hearty embracing Christ as a Saviour from punishment, not only a conviction of conscience that we have deserved the punishment, such as the devils and damned have; but there is a hearty acknowledgment of it, with the submission of the soul, so as with the accord of the heart, to own that God might be just and worthy in the punishment. If the heart rises against the act or judgment of God, in holding us obliged to the punishment, when he offers us his Son as a Saviour from the punishment, we cannot with the consent of the heart receive him in that character: But if persons thus submit to the righteousness of so dreadful a punishment of sin, this carries in it an hatred of sin.

That such a sense of our sinfulness, and utter unworthiness, and desert of punishment, belongs to the nature of saving faith, is what the scripture from time to time seems to hold forth; as particularly in Matth. xv. 26....28. "But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth Lord: Yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered, and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith." And Luke vii. 6....9. "The centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself, for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof. Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee; but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed: For I also am a man set under authority," &c.....When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." And also ver. 37, 38. "And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet, with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment." Together with

verse 50. "He said unto the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

These things do not necessarily suppose that repentance and faith are words of just the same signification; for it is only so much in justifying faith as respects the evil to be delivered from by the Saviour, that is called repentance: And besides, both repentance and faith, take them only in their general nature, and they are entirely distinct: Repentance is a sorrow for sin, and forsaking of it; and faith is a trusting in God's sufficiency and truth: But faith and repentance, as evangelical duties, or justifying faith, and repentance for remission of sins, contain more in them, and imply a respect to a Mediator, and involve each other's nature;* though it be true, that they still bear the name of faith and repentance, from those general moral virtues, that repentance which is a duty of natural religion, and that faith, that was a duty required under the first covenant, that are contained in the evangelical act; which severally appear when this act is considered with respect to its different terms and objects, that it is conversant about.

It may be objected here, that the scripture sometimes mentions faith and repentance together, as if they were entirely distinct things; as in Mark i. 15. "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." But there is no need of understanding these as two distinct conditions of salvation, but the words are exegetical one of another: It is to teach us after what manner we must repent, viz. as believing the gospel, and after what manner we must believe the gospel, viz. as repenting: These words no more prove faith and repentance to be entirely distinct, than those forementioned. Matth. xxi. 32. "And ye when ye had seen it, repented not afterwards, that ye might believe him." Or those, 2 Tim. ii. 25. "If peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowl-

* Agreeable to this, is what Mr. Locke says in his second Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. Vol. II, of his works, p. 630, 634, "The believing him, therefore, to be the Messiah, is very often, with great reason, put both for faith and repentance too, which are sometimes set down singly, where one is put for both, as implying the other."

dging of the truth." The apostle, in Acts xix. 4, seems to have reference to these words of John the Baptist, "John baptised with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe," &c. where the latter words, as we have already observed, are to explain how he preached repentance.

Another scripture where faith and repentance are mentioned together, is Acts xx. 21. "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ." It may be objected that in this place, faith and repentance are not only spoken of as distinct things, but having distinct objects.

To this I answer, that it is true that faith and repentance, in their general nature, are distinct things; and repentance, for the remission of sins, or that in justifying faith that respects the evil to be delivered from, so far as it regards that term, which is what especially denominates it repentance, has respect to God as the object, because he is the being offended by sin, and to be reconciled, but that in this justifying act, whence it is denominated faith, does more especially respect Christ. But let us interpret it how we will, the objection of faith being here so distinguished from repentance, is as much for an objection against the scheme of those that oppose justification by faith alone, as against this scheme; for they hold that the justifying faith that the Apostle Paul speaks of, includes repentance, as has been already observed.

3. This repentance that has been described, is indeed the special condition of remission of sin. This seems very evident by the Scripture, as particularly, Mark i. 4. "John did baptise in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins." So, Luke iii. 3. "And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins." Luke xxiv. 47. "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." Acts v. 31. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and Saviour, for to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Chap.

ii. 38. "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." And chap. iii. 19. "Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." The like is evident by Lev. xxvi. 40.....42. Job xxxiii. 27, 28. Psalm xxxii. 5. Prov. xxviii. 13. Jer. iii 13, and 1 John i. 9, and other places.

And the reason may be plain from what has been said. We need not wonder that in faith which especially respects sin, should be especially the condition of remission of sins; or that this motion or exercise of the soul, as it rejects and flies from evil, and embraces Christ as a Saviour from it, should especially be the condition of being free from that evil; in like manner, as the same principle or motion, as it seeks good, and cleaves to Christ as the procurer of that good, should be the condition of obtaining that good. Faith with respect to good is accepting, and with respect to evil it is rejecting. Yea this rejecting evil is itself an act of acceptance; it is accepting freedom or separation from that evil; and this freedom or separation is the benefit bestowed in remission. No wonder that that in faith which immediately respects this benefit, and is our acceptance of this benefit, should be the special condition of our having it: It is so with respect to all the benefits that Christ has purchased. Trusting in God through Christ for such a particular benefit that we need, is the special condition of our having it: It is so with respect to all the benefits that Christ has purchased. Trusting in God through Christ for such a particular benefit that we need is the special condition of obtaining that benefit. When we need protection from enemies, the exercise of faith with respect to such a benefit, or trusting in Christ for protection from enemies, is especially the way to obtain that particular benefit, rather than trusting in Christ for something else; and so of any other benefit that might be mentioned. So prayer (which is the expression of faith) for a particular mercy needed, is especially the way to obtain that mercy.*

* If repentance justifies, or be that by which we obtain pardon of sin any other way than this, it must be either as a virtue or righteousness, or something amiable in us; or else it must be, that our sorrow and con-

So that we see that no argument can be drawn from hence against the doctrine of justification by faith alone. And there is that in the nature of repentance, which peculiarly tends to establish the contrary of justification by works: For nothing so much renounces our own unworthiness and excellency, as repentance; the very nature of it is to acknowledge our own utter sinfulness and unworthiness, and to renounce our own goodness, and all confidence in self; and so to trust in the propitiation of the Mediator, and ascribe all the glory of forgiveness to him.

Object. 6. The last objection I shall mention, is that paragraph in the 2d chapter of James, where persons are said expressly to be justified by works; verse 21 "Was not Abraham our Father justified by works?" verse 24. "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only;" verse 25. "Was not Rahab the harlot justified by works?"

In answer to this objection I would,

1. Take notice of the great unfairness of the divines that oppose us, in the improvement they make of this passage against us. All will allow, that in that proposition of St. James, "By works a man is justified, and not by faith only," one of the terms, either the word *faith*, or else the word *justify*, is not to be understood precisely in the same sense as the same terms when used by St. Paul; because they suppose, as well as we, that it was not the intent of the Apostle James to contradict St. Paul in that doctrine of justification by faith alone, that he had instructed the churches in: But if we understand both the terms, as used by each apostle, in precisely the same sense, then what one asserts is a precise, direct, and full contradiction of the other, the one affirming and the other denying the very same thing. So that all the controversy from this text comes to this, viz. which of these two terms shall be understood in a diversity from St. Paul. They say that it is the word *faith*; for they suppose, that when the Apostle Paul uses the word, and makes faith that by which alone we are justified, that then by

demning what is past, is accepted as some atonement for it; both which are equally contrary to the gospel doctrine of justification by Christ.

it is understood a compliance with, and practice of Christianity in general; so as to include all saving Christian virtue and obedience. But as the Apostle James uses the word faith in this place, they suppose thereby is to be understood only an assent of the understanding to the truth of gospel doctrines, as distinguished from good works, and that may exist separate from them, and from all saving grace. We, on the other hand, suppose that the word *justify* is to be understood in a different sense from the Apostle Paul So that they are forced to go as far in their scheme, in altering the sense of terms from Paul's use of them, as we But yet at the same time that they freely vary the sense of the former of them, viz. faith, yet when we understand the latter, viz. justify, in a different sense from St. Paul, they cry out of us, what necessity of framing this distinction, but only to serve an opinion? At this rate a man may maintain any thing, though never so contrary to scripture, and elude the clearest text in the Bible! Though they do not shew us why we have not as good warrant to understand the word *justify* in a diversity from St. Paul, as they the word *faith*. If the sense of one of the words must be varied on either scheme, to make the Apostle James's doctrine consistent with the Apostle Paul's, and the varying the sense of one term or the other, be all that stands in the way of their agreeing with either scheme, and the varying the sense of the latter, be in itself as fair as of the former, then the text lies as fair for one scheme as the other, and can no more fairly be an objection against our scheme than theirs. And if so, what becomes of all this great objection from this passage in James?

2. If there be no more difficulty in varying the sense of one of these terms than another, from any thing in the text itself, so as to make the words suit with either scheme, then certainly that is to be chosen that is most agreeable to the current of scripture, and other places where the same matter is more particularly and fully treated of; and therefore that we should understand the word *justify* in this passage of James, in a sense in some respect diverse from that in which St. Paul uses it. For by what has been already said, it may ap-

pear, that there is no one doctrine in the whole Bible more fully asserted, explained and urged, than the doctrine of justification by faith alone, without any of our own righteousness.

3. There is a very fair interpretation of this passage of St. James, that is no way inconsistent with this doctrine of justification, which I have shown that other scriptures do so abundantly teach, which interpretation the words themselves will as well allow of, as that which the objectors put upon them, and much better agrees with the context; and that is, that works are here spoken of as justifying as evidences. A man may be said to be justified by that which clears him, or vindicates him, or makes the goodness of his cause manifest. When a person has a cause tried in a civil court, and is justified or cleared, he may be said in different senses to be cleared, by the goodness of his cause, and by the goodness of the evidences of it. He may be said to be cleared by what evidences his cause to be good. That which renders his cause good, is the proper ground of his justification; it is by that that he is himself a proper subject of it; but evidences justify, only as they manifest that his cause is good in fact, whether they are of such a nature as to have any influence to render it so or no. It is by works that our cause appears to be good; but by faith our cause not only appears to be good, but becomes good; because thereby we are united to Christ. That the word *justify* should be sometimes understood to signify the former of these, as well as the latter, is agreeable to the use of the word in common speech; as we say such an one stood up to justify another, i. e. he endeavored to shew or manifest his cause to be good. And it is certain that the word is sometimes used in this sense in scripture when speaking of our being justified before God; as where it is said, we shall be justified by our words, Matth. xii. 39. "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." It cannot be meant that men are accepted before God on the account of their words; for God has told us nothing more plainly, than that it is the heart that he looks at; and that when he acts as judge towards men, in order to justifying or condemning, he tries the

heart, Jer. xi. 20. "But O Lord of hosts, that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them; for unto thee have I revealed my cause." Psalm vii. 8, 9. "The Lord shall judge the people: Judge me O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me. O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just; for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins." Verse 11. "God judgeth the righteous." And many other places to the like purpose. And therefore men can be justified by their words, no otherwise than as evidences or manifestations of what is in the heart. And it is thus that Christ speaks of the words in this very place, as is evident by the context, verse 34. 35. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart," &c. The words, or sounds themselves, are neither parts of godliness, nor evidences of godliness, but as signs of what is inward.

God himself, when he acts towards men as judge, in order to a declarative judgment, makes use of evidences, and so judges men by their works. And therefore, at the day of judgment, God will judge men according to their works: For though God will stand in no need of evidence to inform him what is right, yet it is to be considered, that he will then sit in judgment, not as earthly judges do, to find out what is right in a cause, but to declare and manifest what is right; and therefore that day is called by the apostle, "the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God," Rom. ii. 5.

To be justified, is to be approved and accepted: But a man may be said to be approved and accepted in two respects; the one is to be approved really and the other to be approved and accepted declaratively. Justification is twofold; it is either the acceptance and approbation of the judge itself, or the manifestation of that approbation, by a sentence or judgment declared by the judge, either to our own consciences, or to the world. If justification be understood in the former sense, for the approbation itself, that is only that by which we become fit to be approved: But if it be understood

in the latter sense, for the manifestation of this approbation, it is by whatever is a proper evidence of that fitness. In the former, faith only is concerned; because it is by that only in us that we become fit to be accepted and approved: In the latter, whatever is an evidence of our fitness, is alike concerned. And therefore, take justification in this sense, and then faith, and all other graces and good works have a common and equal concern in it: For any other grace, or holy act, is equally an evidence of a qualification for acceptance or approbation, as faith. To justify has always, in common speech, signified indifferently, either simply approbation, or testifying that approbation; sometimes one, and sometimes the other: And that because they are both the same, only as one is outwardly what the other is inwardly. So we, and it may be all nations, are wont to give the same names to two things, when one is only declarative of the other. Thus sometimes judging intends only judging in our thoughts; at other times, testifying and declaring judgment. So such words as justify, condemn, accept, reject, prize, slight, approve, renounce, are sometimes put for mental acts, at other times, for an outward treatment. So in the sense in which the Apostle James seems to use the word *justify* for *manifestative justification*, a man is justified not only by faith but also by works; as a tree is manifested to be good, not only by immediately examining the tree, but also by the fruit. Prov. xx. 11. "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right."

The drift of the apostle does not require that he should be understood in any other sense: For all that he aims at, as appears by a view of the context, is to prove that good works are necessary. The error of those that he opposed was this, That good works were not necessary to salvation; that if they did but believe that there was but one God, and that Christ was the Son of God, and the like, and were baptised, they were safe, let them live how they would; which doctrine greatly tended to licentiousness. The evincing of the contrary of this is evidently the apostle's scope.

And that we should understand the apostle, of works justifying as an evidence, and in a declarative judgment, is what a due consideration of the context will naturally lead us to. For it is plain, that the apostle is here insisting on works, in the quality of a necessary manifestation and evidence of faith, or as what the truth of faith is shewed or made to appear by; As verse 18. "Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." And when he says, verse 26. "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." It is much more rational and natural to understand him as speaking of works done as proper signs and evidences of the reality, life, and goodness of faith. Not that the very works or actions are properly the life of faith, as the spirit in the body; but it is the active, working nature of faith, of which the actions or works done are the signs, that is itself the life and spirit of faith. The sign of a thing is often in scripture language said to be that thing; so it is in that comparison by which the apostle illustrates it. It is not the actions themselves of a body, that are properly the life or spirit of the body; but it is the active nature, of which those actions or motions are the signs, that is the life of the body. That which makes men call any thing alive, is, that they observe that it has an active, operative nature in it; which they observe no otherwise than by the actions or motions that are the signs of it. It is plainly the apostle's aim to prove that works are necessary from that, that if faith hath not works, it is a sign that it is not a good sort of faith; which would not have been to his purpose, if it was his design to shew that it is not by faith alone though of a right sort, that we have acceptance with God, but that we are accepted on the account of obedience as well as faith. It is evident by the apostle's reasoning, that the necessity of works that he speaks of, is not as having a parallel concern in our salvation with faith; but he speaks of works only as related to faith, and expressive of it; which, after all, leaves faith the alone fundamental condition, without any thing else having a parallel concern with it in this affair; and other things conditions, only as several expressions and evidences of it.

That the apostle speaks of works justifying only as a sign or evidence, and in God's declarative judgment, is further confirmed by verse 21. "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered up Isaac his son upon the altar?" Here the apostle seems plainly to refer to that declarative judgment of God, concerning Abraham's sincerity, manifested to him, for the peace and assurance of his own conscience after his offering up Isaac his son on the altar, that we have account of, Gen. xxii. 12. "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." But here it is plain, and expressed in the very words of justification or approbation, that this work of Abraham's, his offering up his son on the altar, justified him as an evidence. When the Apostle James says, we are justified by works, he may, and ought to be understood in a sense agreeable to the instance he brings for the proof of it: But justification in that instance appears by the works of justification themselves referred to, to be by works as an evidence. And where this instance of Abraham's obedience is elsewhere mentioned in the New Testament, it is mentioned as a fruit and evidence of his faith. Heb. xi. 17. "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son."

And in the other instance which the apostle mentions, verse 25. "Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?" The apostle refers to a declarative judgment, in that particular testimony which was given of God's approbation of her as a believer, in directing Joshua to save her when the rest of Jericho was destroyed, Josh. vi. 25. "And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho." This was accepted as an evidence and expression of her faith. Heb. xi. 32. "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace." The apostle in saying, "Was not Rahab the harlot justified by

works?" By the manner of his speaking has reference to something in her history; but we have no account in her history of any other justification of her but this.

4. If, notwithstanding, any choose to take justification in St. James's precisely as we do in Paul's epistles, for God's acceptance or approbation itself, and not any expression of that approbation; what has been already said concerning the manner in which acts of evangelical obedience are concerned in the affair of our justification, affords a very easy, clear and full answer: For if we take works as acts or expressions of faith, they are not excluded; so a man is not justified by faith only, but also by works; i. e. he is not justified only by faith as a principle in the heart, or in its first and more immanent acts, but also by the effective acts of it in life, which are the expressions of the life of faith, as the operations and actions of the body are of the life of that; agreeable to verse 26.

What has been said in answer to these objections, may also, I hope, abundantly serve for an answer to that objection, that is often made against this doctrine, viz. that it encourages licentiousness in life. For, from what has been said, we may see that the scripture doctrine of justification by faith alone, without any manner of goodness or excellency of ours, does in no wise diminish either the necessity or benefit of a sincere, evangelical, universal obedience: In that, man's salvation is not only indissolubly connected with it, and damnation with the want of it, in those that have opportunity for it, but that it depends upon it in many respects; as it is the way to it, and the necessary preparation for it, and also as eternal blessings are bestowed in reward for it, and as our justification in our own consciences, and at the day of judgment, depends on it, as the proper evidence of our acceptable state; and that, even in accepting us as entitled to life in our justification, God has respect to this, as that on which the fitness of such an act of justification depends: So that our salvation does as truly depend upon it, as if we were justified for the moral excellency of it. And besides all this, the degree of our happiness to all eternity is suspended on, and determined by the degree of this. So that this gospel scheme of justifi-

nation is as far from encouraging licentiousness, and contains as much to encourage and excite to strict and universal obedience, and the utmost possible eminency of holiness, as any scheme that can be devised, and indeed unspeakably more.

I come now to the

V. And last thing proposed, which is, to consider the "importance of this doctrine."

I know there are many that make as though this controversy was of no great importance; that it is chiefly a matter of nice speculation, depending on certain subtle distinctions, which many that make use of them do not understand themselves; and that the difference is not of such consequence as to be worth the being zealous about; and that more hurt is done by raising disputes about it than good.

Indeed I am far from thinking that it is of absolute necessity that persons should understand, and be agreed upon, all the distinctions needful particularly to explain and defend this doctrine against all cavils and objections; (though all Christians should strive after an increase of knowledge, and none should content themselves without some clear and distinct understanding in this point:) But that we should believe in the general, according to the clear and abundant revelations of God's word, that it is none of our own excellency, virtue, or righteousness, that is the ground of our being received from a state of condemnation into a state of acceptance in God's sight, but only Jesus Christ, and his righteousness, and worthiness, received by faith. This I think to be of great importance, at least in application to ourselves; and that for the following reasons.

1. The Scripture treats of this doctrine, as a doctrine of very great importance. That there is a certain doctrine of justification by faith, in opposition to justification by the works of the law, that the Apostle Paul insists upon as of the greatest importance, none will deny; because there is nothing in the Bible more apparent. The apostle, under the infallible conduct of the Spirit of God, thought it worth his most strenuous and zealous disputing about and defending. He speaks of the contrary doctrine as fatal and ruinous to the souls of

men, in the latter end of the ninth chapter of Romans, and beginning of the tenth. He speaks of it as subversive of the gospel of Christ, and calls it another gospel, and says concerning it, if any one, "though an angel, from heaven, preach it, let him be accursed;" Gal. i. 6....9 compared with the following part of the epistle. Certainly we must allow the apostles to be good judges of the importance and tendency of doctrines; at least the Holy Ghost in them. And doubtless we are safe, and in no danger of harshness and censoriousness, if we only follow him, and keep close to his express teachings, in what we believe and say of the hurtful and pernicious tendency of any error. Why are we to blame, or to be cried out of, for saying what the Bible has taught us to say, or for believing what the Holy Ghost has taught us to that end that we might believe it?

2. The adverse scheme lays another foundation of man's salvation than God hath laid. I do not now speak of that ineffectual redemption that they suppose to be universal, and what all mankind are equally the subjects of; but I say, it lays entirely another foundation of man's actual, discriminating salvation, or that salvation, wherein true Christians differ from wicked men. We suppose the foundation of this to be Christ's worthiness and righteousness: On the contrary, that scheme supposes it to be men's own virtue; even so, that this is the ground of a saving interest in Christ itself. It takes away Christ out of the place of the bottom stone, and puts in men's own virtue in the room of him: So that Christ himself in the affair of distinguishing, actual salvation, is laid upon this foundation. And the foundation being so different, I leave it to every one to judge whether the difference between the two schemes consists only in punctilios of small consequence. The foundations being contrary, makes the whole scheme exceeding diverse and opposite; the one is a gospel scheme, the other a legal one.

3. It is in this doctrine that the most essential difference lies between the covenant of grace and the first covenant. The adverse scheme of justification supposes that we are justified by our works, in the very same sense wherein man was to

have been justified by his works under the first covenant. By that covenant our first parents were not to have had eternal life given them for any proper merit in their obedience; because their perfect obedience was a debt that they owed God: Nor was it to be bestowed for any proportion between the dignity of their obedience, and the value of the reward; but only it was to be bestowed from a regard to a moral fitness in the virtue of their obedience, to the reward of God's favor; and a title to eternal life was to be given them, as a testimony of God's pleasedness with their works, or his regard to the inherent beauty of their virtue. And so it is the very same way that those in the adverse scheme suppose that we are received into God's special favor now, and to those saving benefits that are the testimonies of it. I am sensible the divines of that side entirely disclaim the Popish doctrine of merit; and are free to speak of our utter unworthiness, and the great imperfection of all our services: But after all, it is our virtue, imperfect as it is, that recommends men to God, by which good men come to have a saving interest in Christ, and God's favor, rather than others; and these things are bestowed in testimony of God's respect to their goodness. So that whether they will allow the term *merit* or no, yet they hold, that we are accepted by our own merit, in the same sense though not in the same degree as under the first covenant.

But the great and most distinguishing difference between that covenant and the covenant of grace is, that by the covenant of grace we are not thus justified by our own works, but only by faith in Jesus Christ. It is on this account chiefly that the new covenant deserves the name of a covenant of grace, as is evident by Rom. iv. 16. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace." And chap. iii. 20, 24. "Therefore by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight—Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." And chap. xi. 6. "And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace: But if it be of works; then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." Gal. v. 4. "Whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen

from grace" And therefore the apostle when in the same epistle to the Galatians, he speaks of the doctrine of justification by works as another gospel, he adds, "which is not another," chap i. verse 6, 7 It is no gospel at all; it is law: It is no covenant of grace, but of works: It is not an evangelical, but a legal doctrine. Certainly that doctrine wherein consists the greatest and most essential difference between the covenant of grace and the first covenant, must be a doctrine of great importance That doctrine of the gospel by which above all others it is worthy of the name gospel, is doubtless a very important doctrine of the gospel.

4 This is the main thing that fallen men stood in need of divine revelation for, to teach us how we that have sinned may come to be again accepted of God; or, which is the same thing, how the sinner may be justified Something beyond the light of nature is necessary to salvation chiefly on this account. Mere natural reason afforded no means by which we could come to the knowledge of this, it depending on the sovereign pleasure of the Being that we had offended by sin. This seems to be the great drift of that revelation that God has given, and of all those mysteries it reveals, all those great doctrines that are peculiarly doctrines of revelation, and above the light of nature. It seems to have been very much on this account, that it was requisite that the doctrine of the Trinity itself should be revealed to us; that by a discovery of the concern of the several divine persons in the great affair of our salvation, we might the better understand and see how all our dependence in this affair is on God, and our sufficiency all in him, and not in ourselves; that he is all in all in this business, agreeable to that in 1 Cor. i. 29....31: "That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." What is the gospel, but only the glad tidings of a new way of acceptance with God unto life, a way wherein sinners may come to be free from the guilt of sin, and obtain a title to eternal life? And if, when this way is revealed,

it is rejected, and another of man's devising be put in the room of it, without doubt it must be an error of great importance, and the apostle might well say it was another gospel.

5. The contrary scheme of justification derogates much from the honor of God and the Mediator. I have already shewn how it diminishes the glory of the Mediator, in ascribing that to man's virtue and goodness, which belongs alone to his worthiness and righteousness.

By the apostle's sense of the matter it renders Christ needless, Gal. v. 4. "Christ is become of no effect to you, whosoever of you are justified by the law." If that scheme of justification be followed in its conequences, it utterly overthrows the glory of all the great things that have been contrived, and done, and suffered in the work of redemption. Gal. ii. 21. "If righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in vain." It has also been already shewn how it diminishes the glory of divine grace, (which is the attribute God hath especially set himself to glorify in the work of redemption;) and so that it greatly diminishes the obligation to gratitude in the sinner that is saved! Yea, that in the sense of the apostle, it makes void the distinguishing grace of the gospel. Gal. v. 4. Whosoever of you are justified "by the law, are fallen from grace." It diminishes the glory of the grace of God and the Redeemer, and proportionably magnifies man: It makes him something before God, when indeed he is nothing: It makes the goodness and excellency of fallen man to be something, which I have shewn are nothing. I have also already shewn, that it is contrary to the truth of God in the threatening of his holy law, to justify the sinner for his virtue. And whether it were contrary to God's truth or no, it is a scheme of things very unworthy of God, that supposes that God, when about to lift up a poor, forlorn malefactor, condemned to eternal misery for sinning against his Majesty, out of his misery, and to make him unspeakably and eternally happy, by bestowing his Son and himself, upon him, as it were, sets all this to sale, for the price of his virtue and excellency. I know that those we oppose do acknowledge,

that the price is very disproportionate to the benefit bestowed; and say, that God's grace is wonderfully manifested in accepting so little virtue, and bestowing so glorious a reward for such imperfect righteousness. But seeing we are such infinitely sinful and abominable creatures in Gods sight, and by our infinite guilt have brought ourselves into such wretched and deplorable circumstances, and all our righteousnesses are nothing, and ten thousand times worse than nothing, (if God looks upon them as they be in themselves) is it not immensely more worthy of the infinite majesty and glory of God, to deliver and make happy such poor, filthy worms, such wretched vagabonds and captives, without any money or price of theirs, or any manner of expectation of any excellency or virtue in them, in any wise to recommend them? Will it not betray a foolish, exalting opinion of ourselves, and a mean one of God, to have a thought of offering any thing of ours, to recommend us to the favor of being brought from wallowing, like filthy swine, in the mire of our sins, and from the enmity and misery of devils in the lowest hell, to the state of God's dear children, in the everlasting arms of his love, in heavenly glory; or to imagine that that is the constitution of God, that we should bring our filthy rags, and offer them to him as the price of this?

6. The opposite scheme does most directly tend to lead men to trust in their own righteousness for justification, which is a thing fatal to the soul. This is what men are of themselves exceedingly prone to do, (and that though they are never so much taught the contrary) through the exceeding partial and high thoughts they have of themselves, and their exceeding dulness of apprehending any such mystery as our being accepted for the righteousness of another. But this scheme does directly teach men to trust in their own righteousness for justification; in that it teaches them that this is indeed what they must be justified by, being the way of justification that God himself has appointed. So that if a man had naturally no disposition to trust in his own righteousness, yet if he embraced this scheme, and acted consistent with it, it would lead him to it. But that trusting in our own right-

tousness, is a thing fatal to the soul, is what the scripture plainly teaches us: It tells us, that it will cause that Christ profit us nothing, and be of no effect to us, Gal. v. 2....4. For though the apostle speaks there particularly of circumcision, yet (I have shewn already, that) it is not merely being circumcised, but trusting in circumcision as a righteousness, that the apostle has respect to. He could not mean, that merely being circumcised would render Christ of no profit or effect to a person; for we read that he himself, for certain reasons, took Timothy and circumcised him, Acts xvi. 3. And the same is evident by the context, and by the rest of the epistle. And the apostle speaks of trusting in their own righteousness as fatal to the Jews, Rom. ix. 31, 32. "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it, not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law; for they stumbled at that stumbling stone." Together with chap. x. verse 3. "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." And this is spoken of as fatal to the Pharisees, in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, that Christ spake to them to reprove them for trusting in themselves that they were righteous. The design of the parable is to shew them, that the very Publicans shall be justified, rather than they; as appears by the reflection Christ makes upon it Luke xviii. 14. "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other;" that is, this and not the other. The fatal tendency of it might also be proved from its inconsistence with the nature of justifying faith, and also its inconsistence with the nature of that humiliation that the Scripture often speaks of as absolutely necessary to salvation; but these scriptures are so express, that it is needless to bring any further arguments.

How far a wonderful and mysterious agency of God's Spirit may so influence some men's hearts, that their practice in this regard may be contrary to their own principles, so that they shall not trust in their own righteousness, though they profess that men are justified by their own righteousness;

or how far they believe the doctrine of justification by men's own righteousness in general, and yet not believe it in a particular application of it to themselves; or how far that error which they may have been led into by education, or cunning sophistry of others, may yet be indeed contrary to the prevailing disposition of their hearts, and contrary to their practice: Or how far some may seem to maintain a doctrine contrary to this gospel doctrine of justification, that really do not, but only express themselves differently from others; or seem to oppose it through their misunderstanding of our expressions, or we of theirs, when indeed our real sentiments are the same in the main; or may seem to differ more than they do, by using terms that are without a precisely fixed and determinate meaning; or to be wide in their sentiments from this doctrine, for want of a distinct understanding of it, whose hearts, at the same time, entirely agree with it, and if once it was clearly explained to their understandings, would immediately close with it, and embrace it: How far these things may be, I will not determine; but am fully persuaded that great allowances are to be made on these and such like accounts, in innumerable instances; though it is manifest, from what has been said, that the teaching and propagating contrary doctrines and schemes are of a pernicious and fatal tendency.

SERMON II.

Joseph's great Temptation and gracious Deliverance.

GENESIS XXXIX. 12.

AND HE LEFT HIS GARMENT IN HER HAND, AND FLED, AND GOT HIM OUT.

WE have an account here, and in the context, of that remarkable behavior of Joseph in the house of Potiphar, that was the occasion both of his great affliction, and also afterwards of his high advancement and great prosperity in the land of Egypt. The behavior that I speak of, is that which was on occasion of the temptation that his mistress laid before him to commit uncleanness with her.

We read in the beginning of the chapter how Joseph, after he had been so cruelly treated by his brethren, and sold into Egypt for a slave, was advanced in the house of Potiphar, who had bought him. Joseph was one that feared God, and therefore God was with him; and wonderfully ordered things for him, and so influenced the heart of Potiphar his master, that instead of keeping him as a mere slave, to which purpose he was sold, he made him his steward and overseer over his house, and all that he had was put into his hands; insomuch that we are told, verse 6. "That he left all that he had in his hand; and that he knew not ought that he had, save the bread which he did eat." While Joseph was in these prosperous circumstances, he met with a great temptation in his master's house; so we are told that he, being a goodly person, and well favored, his mistress cast her eyes upon and lusted after him, and used all her art to tempt him to commit uncleanness with her.

Concerning this temptation, and his behavior under it, many things are worthy to be noted.

We may observe, how great the temptation was that he was under. It is to be considered, Joseph was now in his youth, a season of life when persons are most liable to be overcome by temptations of this nature. And he was in a state of unexpected prosperity in Potiphar's house, which has a tendency to lift persons up, especially young ones, whereby commonly they more easily fall before temptations.

And then the superiority of the person that laid the temptation before him rendered it much the greater. She was his mistress, and he a servant under her. And the manner of her tempting him. She did not only carry herself so to Joseph, as to give him cause to suspect that he might be admitted to such criminal converse with her, that yet might be accompanied with some apprehension, that possibly he might be mistaken, and so deter him from adventuring on such a proposal; but she directly proposed it to him; plainly manifesting her disposition to it. So that here was no such thing as a suspicion of her unwillingness to deter him, but a manifestation of her desire to entice him to it. Yea, she appeared greatly engaged in the matter. And there was not only her desire manifested to entice him, but her authority over him to enforce the temptation. She was his mistress, and he might well imagine, that if he utterly refused a compliance, he should incur her displeasure; and she, being his master's wife, had power to do much to his disadvantage, and to render his circumstances more uncomfortable in the family.

And the temptation was the greater, in that she did not only tempt him once, but frequently, *day by day*, verse 10. And at last became more violent with him. She caught him by his garment, saying, *lie with me:* As in the verse of the text.

His behavior was very remarkable under these temptations. He absolutely refused any compliance with them: He made no reply that manifested as though the temptation had gained at all upon him; so much as to hesitate about it, or at all to deliberate upon it. He complied in no degree,

either to the gross act she proposed, or any thing tending towards it. or that should in a lesser degree be gratifying to her wicked inclination. And he persisted, resolute and unshaken under her continual solicitations, verse 10. "And it came to pass as she spake to Joseph, day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her." He, to his utmost, avoided so much as being where she was. And the motives and principles from which he acted, manifested by his reply to her solicitations, are remarkable.

He first sets before her how injuriously he should act against his master, if he should comply with her proposal: "Behold my master....hath committed all that he hath to my hand; there is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife." But he then proceeded to inform her of that, which above all things, deterred him from a compliance, viz. that it would be great wickedness, and sin against God. "How shall I do this, and sin against God! He would not do any such thing, as he would not injure his master; but that which influenced more than all on this occasion, was the fear of sinning against God. On this account he persisted in his resolution to the last.

In the text we have an account of his behavior under the last and greatest temptation that he had from her. This temptation was great, as we are told it was at a time when there was nobody in the house but he and his mistress, verse 11, there was an opportunity to commit the fact with the greatest secrecy. And at this time it seems that she was more violent than ever before. "She caught him by the garment," &c. She laid hold on him as though she was resolute to attain her purpose of him.

Under these circumstances he not only refused her, but fled from her, as he would have done from one that was going to assassinate, or murder him; he escaped as for his life. He not only would not be guilty of such a fact, but neither would he by any means be in the house with her, where he should be in the way of her temptation.

This behavior of Joseph is doubtless recorded for the instruction of all: Therefore from the words I shall observe this

DOCTRINE.

It is our duty, not only to avoid those things that are themselves sinful, but also, as far as may be, those things that lead and expose to sin.

Thus did Joseph: He not only refused actually to commit uncleanness with his mistress, who enticed him, but refused to be there, where he should be in the way of temptation, verse 10. He refused to lie by her, or be with her: And in the text we are told, *he fled, and got him out*; would by no means be in her company. Though it was no sin in itself for Joseph to be in the house where his mistress was, but under these circumstances it would expose him to sin. Joseph was sensible he had naturally a corrupt heart, that tended to betray him to sin; and therefore he would by no means be in the way of temptation; but with haste he fled, he ran from the dangerous place. In as much as he was exposed to sin in that house where he was, he fled out of it with as much haste as if the house had been all a light of fire, or full of enemies, who stood ready with drawn swords to stab him to the very heart. When she took him by the garment, he left his garment in her hands: He had rather lose his garment than stay a moment there, where he was in such danger of losing his chastity.

I say in the *doctrine*, that persons should avoid things that expose to sin, as far as may be, because the case may be so, that persons may be called to expose themselves to temptation; and when it is so, they may hope for divine strength and protection under temptations.

The case may be so that it may be a man's indispensable duty to undertake an office, or piece of work, that is attended with a great deal of temptation. Thus, although ordinarily a man ought not to run into that temptation, of being exposed to persecution for the true religion, lest the temptation should be too hard for him; but should avoid it as much as may be;

(therefore Christ thus directs his disciples, Matth. x. 23. "When ye be persecuted in one city flee to another.") Yet the case may be so, that a man may be called not to flee from persecution, but to run the venture of such a trial, trusting in God to uphold him under it. Ministers and magistrates may be obliged to continue with their people in such circumstances, as Nehemiah says, Neh. vi. 11. "Should such a man as I flee?" So the apostles....

Yea they may be called to go into the midst of it, to those places where they cannot reasonably expect but to meet with such temptations. So sometimes the apostles did. Paul went up to Jerusalem, when he knew before hand, that there, *bonds and afflictions awaited him*, Acts xx. 23.

So in some other cases, the necessity of affairs may call upon men to engage in some business that is peculiarly attended with temptations. But when it is so, men are indeed in this way, least exposed to sin; for they are always safest in the way of duty. Prov. x. 9. "He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely." And though there be many things by which they may have extraordinary temptations, in the affairs they have undertaken, yet if they have a clear call to it, it is no presumption to hope for divine support and preservation in it.

But for persons needlessly to expose themselves to temptation, and to do those things that tend to sin, is unwarrantable and contrary to that excellent example we have set before us in the text. And that we ought to avoid not only those things that are in themselves sinful, but also those things that lead and expose to sin, is manifest by the following arguments:

I. It is a thing very evident and manifest, that we ought to use our utmost endeavors to avoid sin, which is inconsistent with needlessly doing those things that expose and lead to sin. That we ought to do our utmost to avoid sin is manifest, that being the greatest evil; and the greater any evil is, the greater care, and the more earnest endeavors does it require to avoid it. This is plain, and what we by our practice show, that we are all sensible of the truth of. Those things that appear to us very great and dreadful evils, do we use pro-

portionably great care to avoid. And therefore the greatest evil of all requires the greatest and utmost care to avoid it.

Sin is an infinite evil, because committed against an infinitely great and excellent Being, and so a violation of infinite obligation; therefore, however great our care be to avoid sin, it cannot be more than proportionable to the evil we would avoid. Our care and endeavor cannot be infinite, as the evil of sin is infinite; but yet it ought to be to the utmost of our power; we ought to use every method that tends to the avoiding of sin. This is manifest to reason.

And not only so but this is positively required of us in the word of God. Josh. xxii. 5. "Take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses, the servant of the Lord, charged you, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your soul." Deut. iv. 15, 16. "Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves, lest ye corrupt yourselves." Chap. xii. 30. "Take heed to thyself, that thou be not snared, &c." Luke xi. 36. "Take heed, and beware of covetousness. 1 Cor. x. 12. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." Deut. iv. 9. "Take heed to thyself, keep thy soul diligently." These and many other texts of scripture, plainly require of us the utmost possible diligence and caution to avoid sin.

But how can he be said to use the utmost possible diligence and caution to avoid sin, that voluntarily does those things, that naturally expose and lead to sin? How can he be said with the utmost possible caution to avoid an enemy, that voluntarily lays himself in his way? How can he be said to use the utmost possible caution to preserve the life of his child, that suffers it to go on the edge of precipices or pits; or to play on the borders of a deep gulph; or to wander in a wood, that is haunted by beasts of prey?

II. *It is evident that we ought to avoid those things that expose and lead to sin; because a due sense of the evil of sin, and a just hatred of it, will necessarily have this effect upon us, so to do.*

If we were duly sensible of the evil and dreadful nature of sin, we should have an exceeding dread of it upon our spirits. We should hate it worse than death, and should fear it worse than the devil himself; and dread it even as we dread damnation. But those things that men have an exceeding dread of upon their spirits, they naturally and necessarily keep at a great distance from; and avoid those things that they apprehend expose to them. As a child that has been greatly terrified by the sight of any wild beast, will by no means be persuaded to go any where, where it apprehends that it shall be exposed to it, or fall in its way.

Sin in its own nature is infinitely hateful, so in its natural tendency it is infinitely dreadful. It is the tendency of all sin eternally to undo the soul. Every sin naturally carries hell in it! Therefore all sin ought to be treated by us as we would treat a thing that is infinitely terrible. If it be not so, that any one sin, yea, the least sin, do not necessarily bring eternal ruin with it, it is owing to nothing but the free grace and mercy of God to us, and not to the nature and tendency of sin itself. But certainly we ought not to take the less care to avoid sin, or all that tends to it, for the freeness and greatness of God's mercy to us, through which there is hope of pardon; for that would be a most ungrateful and vile abuse of mercy indeed. If it were so, that it were made known to us, that if we ever voluntarily committed any particular act of sin, we should be damned without any remedy or escape, should we not exceedingly dread the commission of such sins? Should we not be very watchful and careful to stand at the greatest distance from that sin, and from every thing that might expose us to it, and that has any tendency to stir up our lusts, or to betray us to such an act of sin? Let us then consider, that if it be not so, that the next voluntary act of known sin shall necessarily and unavoidably issue in certain damnation, yet it will certainly deserve it: We shall thereby really deserve to be cast off, without any remedy or hope; and it can only be owing to free grace, that it will not certainly and remedilessly be followed with such a punishment. And shall we be guilty

of such a vile abuse of God's mercy to us, as to take encouragement from it, the more boldly to expose ourselves to sin?

III. *It is evident that we ought not only to avoid sin, but things that expose and lead to sin; because this is the way we act in things that pertain to our temporal interest.*

Men do not only avoid those things that are themselves the hurt and ruin of their temporal interest, but also the things that tend to expose to it; because they love their temporal lives, they will not only actually avoid killing themselves, but they are very careful to avoid those things that bring their lives into danger, though they do not certainly know but they may escape.

They are careful not to pass rivers and deep waters on rotten ice, though they do not certainly know that they shall fall through and drown; so they will not only avoid those things that would be in themselves the ruin of their estates, such as the setting their own houses on fire, and burning them up with their substance; their taking their money and throwing it into the sea, &c. but they carefully avoid those things by which their estates are exposed. They are watchful, and have their eyes about them; are careful whom they deal with; they are watchful, that they be not overreached in their bargains; that they do not lay themselves open to knaves and fraudulent persons.

If a man be sick of a dangerous distemper, he is careful to avoid every thing that tends to increase the disorder; not only what he knows to be mortal in his situation, but other things that he fears the consequence of, or that may be prejudicial to him. Men are in this way wont to take care of their temporal interest, as what they have a great regard for. And therefore if we are not as careful to avoid sin, as we are to avoid injury in our temporal interest, it will shew a regardless disposition with respect to sin and duty; or that we do not much care though we do sin against God.

God's glory is surely a thing of as much importance and concern as our temporal interest. Certainly we should be careful not to be exposed to sin against the Majesty of heaven

and earth, as men are wont to be of a few pounds; yea, the latter are but mere trifles, compared with the former.

IV. *We are wont to do thus by our dear earthly friends.*

We not only are careful of those things wherein the destruction of their lives, or their hurt and calamity in any respect do directly consist, but are careful to avoid those things that do but remotely tend to it. We are careful to prevent and cut off all occasions of their loss or damage in any respect; and are watchful against that which tends in any wise to deprive them of their comfort or good name; and the reason is because they are very dear to us. In this manner men are wont to be careful of the good of their own children, and dread the approaches of any mischief that they apprehend they are, or may be exposed to. And we should take it hard if our friends did not do thus by us.

And surely we ought to treat God as a dear friend; we ought to act towards him, as those that have a sincere love and unfeigned regard to him; and so ought to watch and be careful against all occasions of that which is contrary to his honor and glory. If we have not a temper and desire so to do, it will show that whatever our pretences are, we are not God's sincere friends, and have no true love to him.

If we should be offended at any that have professed friendship to us, if they treated us in this manner, and were no more careful of our interest, surely God may justly be offended, that we are no more careful of his glory.

V. *We would have God in his providence towards us, not order those things that tend to our hurt, or expose our interest; therefore certainly we ought to avoid things that lead to sin against him.*

We desire and love to have God's providence such toward us, as that our welfare may be well secured. No man loves to live in exposed, uncertain, and dangerous circumstances. While he is so, he lives uncomfortably, in that he lives in continual fear. We desire that God would so order things concerning us, that we may be safe from fear of evil; and that no evil may come nigh our dwelling; and that because we dread calamity. So we do not love the appearance

and approaches of it; and love to have it a great distance from us. We desire to have God be to us as a wall of fire round about us, to defend us; and that he would surround us as the mountains do the vallies, to guard us from every danger or enemy, that so no evil may come nigh us.

Now this plainly shows, that we ought in our behavior towards God to keep at a great distance from sin, and from all that exposes to it; as we desire God in his providence to us, should keep calamity and misery at a great distance from us, and not order those things that expose our welfare.

VI. *Seeing we are to pray we may not be led into temptation; certainly we ought not to run ourselves into it.*

This is one request that Christ directs us to make to God in that form of prayer which he taught his disciples, "Lead us not into temptation." And how inconsistent shall we be with ourselves if we pray to God, not to order it so in his providence, that we should be led into temptations; and yet at the same time we are not careful to avoid temptation; but bring ourselves into it, by doing those things that lead and expose to sin. What selfcontradiction is there in it, for a man to pray to God that he may be kept from that, which he takes no care to avoid? By praying that we may be kept from temptation we profess to God, that being in temptation is a thing that is to be avoided; but by running into it, show that we choose the contrary, viz. not to avoid it.

VII. *The apostle directs us to avoid those things that are in themselves lawful, but tend to lead others into sin; surely then we should avoid what tends to lead ourselves into sin.*

The apostle directs to this, 1 Cor. viii. 9. "Take heed lest this liberty of your's become a stumbling block, to them that are weak." Rom. xiv. 13. "That no man put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." Verse 15. "But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat." Verse 20, 21. "For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine,

nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."

Now if this rule of the apostle be agreeable to the word of Christ, as we must suppose, or expunge what he says out of the canon of the scripture; then a like rule obliges more strongly in those things that tend to lead ourselves into sin.

VIII. *There are many precepts of scripture, that do directly and positively imply, that we ought to avoid those things that tend to sin.*

This very thing is commanded by Christ, Matth. xxvi. 41. where he directs us to watch lest we enter into temptation. But certainly running ourselves into temptation, is the reverse of watching against it.

Again, we are commanded to abstain from all appearance of evil; i. e. do by sin, as a man does by a thing he hates the sight or appearance of; and therefore will avoid any thing that savors of it, or looks like it; and will not come near it, or in sight of it.

Again, Christ commanded to separate from us, those things that are stumbling blocks, or occasions of sin, however dear they are to us. Matth. v. 29. "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee." Verse 30. "And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off." By the right hand offending us, is not meant its paining us, but the word in the original signifies, being a stumbling block; if thy right hand prove a stumbling block, or occasion to fall; i. e. an occasion to sin. Those things are called offences or stumbling blocks in the New Testament, that are the occasions of falling into sin. We ought to avoid running up against stumbling blocks; i. e. we should avoid those things that expose us to fall into sin.

Yea, Christ tells us, we must avoid them however dear they are to us, though as dear as our right hand or right eye. If there be any practice that we have been accustomed to, that naturally tends and exposes us to sin, we must have done with it; though we love it ever so well, and are ever so loth to part with it, though it be as contrary to our inclination, as to cut off our right hand, or pluck out our own right eye, and

that upon pain of damnation, for it is intimated, that if we do not, we must go with two hands and two eyes into hell fire.

And again: God took great care to forbid the children of Israel those things that tended to lead them into sin. For this reason, he forbid them marrying strange wives, Deut. vii. 3, 4. "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them—for they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods." For this reason they were commanded to destroy all those things, that the nations of Canaan had used in their idolatry; and if any were enticed over to idolatry, they were to be destroyed without mercy, though ever so near and dear friends. They were not only to be parted with but stoned with stones; yea they themselves were to fall upon them, and put them to death, though son or daughter, or their bosom friend, Deut. xiii. 6, &c. "If thy brother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, let us go and serve other gods, thou shalt not consent unto him, neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him. But thou shalt surely kill him. Thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death."

Again The wise man warns us to avoid those things that tend and expose us to sin; especially the sin of uncleanness. Prov. vi. 27. "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burnt? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt? So, whosoever toucheth her, shall not be innocent." This is the truth held forth; avoid those customs and practices that naturally tend to stir up lust. And there are many examples in scripture, which have the force of precept; and recorded, as not only worthy of, but demand our imitation. The conduct of Joseph in the text is one; and that recorded of King David is another. Psal. xxxix. 1, 2. "I said I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good." Even from good....that is, he was so watchful over his words, and kept at such a great distance from speaking what might in any way tend to sin, that he avoided, in certain circumstances, speaking what was in itself lawful, lest he should be betrayed into that which was sinful.

IX. *A prudent sense of our own weakness, and exposedness to yield to temptation, obliges us to avoid that which leads or exposes to sin.*

Whoever knows himself and is sensible how weak he is; and his constant exposedness to run into sin; how full of corruption his heart is, which, like fuel, is exposed to catch fire, and bring destruction upon him; how much he has in him to incline him to sin; and how unable he is to stand of himself; who is sensible of this, and has any regard of his duty, but will be very watchful against every thing that may lead and expose to sin; on this account Christ directed us, Matth. xxvi. 41. To watch and pray lest we enter into temptation." The reason there is added, the flesh is weak! He that in confidence of his own strength, boldly runs the venture of sinning by going into temptation, manifests great presumption, and a sottish insensibility of his own weakness. "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." Prov. xxviii. 26.

The wisest and strongest, and some of the most holy men in the world, have been overthrown by such means. So was David; so was Solomon. His wives turned away his heart. If such persons, so eminent for holiness, were this way led into sin, surely it should be a warning to us. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

I now proceed to the application.

In one use of exhortation. To exhort all to a compliance with their duty in this respect, not only to avoid sin, but those things that lead and expose to sin.

If it be made out clearly and evidently from reason and the word of God, to be our duty so to do, this would be enough with all Christians. Will a follower of Christ stand objecting and disputing against a thing, that is irrefragably proved and demonstrated to be his duty?

But here some may be ready to inquire, How shall we know what things do lead and expose to sin? Let a man do what he will, he cannot avoid sinning, as long as he has such a corrupt heart within him. And there is nothing a man can do, or turn his hand to, but that he may find some temptation in it. And though it be true, as it is said in the doctrine, that

a man ought, as far as may be, to avoid those things that lead and expose to sin; and it is evident by the arguments that have been brought, that those things that have special tendency to expose men to sin, are what we ought to shun, as much as in us lies: Yet how shall we judge and determine what things they are, that have a natural tendency to sin; or do especially lead to it?

I would answer in some particulars, which are plain and easy, and which cannot be denied without the greatest absurdity.

Answer 1. *That which is bordering on those sins that the lusts of men's hearts strongly incline them to, is of this sort.* Men come into the world, with many strong and violent lusts in their hearts, and and are exceeding prone of themselves to to transgress, even in the safest circumstances they can be placed in. And surely so much the nearer they are to that sin, which they are naturally strongly inclined to, so much the more are they exposed. If any of us that are parents, should see our children near the brink of some deep pit, or close by the edge of the precipice of an high mountain, and not only so, but the ground upon which the child stood slippery, and steeply descending directly towards the precipice, should we not reckon a child exposed in such a case? Should we not be in haste to remove the child from its very dangerous situation?

It was the manner among the Israelites, to build their houses with flat roofs, so that persons might walk on the tops of their houses. And therefore God took care to make it a law among them, that every man should have battlements upon the edges of their roofs; lest any person should fall off and be killed. Deut. xxii. 8. "When thou buildest a new house then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence." And certainly we ought to take the like care that we do not fall into sin; which carries in it eternal death. We should, as it were, fix a battlement, a guard to keep us from the edge of the precipice. Much more ought we to take care, that we do not go upon a roof that is not only without battlements, but when it is steep, and we shall n atura lly

Men's lusts are like strong enemies, endeavoring to draw them into sin. If a man stood upon a dangerous precipice, and had enemies about him, pulling and drawing him, endeavoring to throw him down; would he in such a case, choose, or dare to stand near the edge? Would he look upon himself safe close on the brink? Would he not endeavor for his own safety, to keep at a distance?

2. *Those things that tend to feed lusts in the imagination, are of this kind.*

They lead and expose him to sin. Those things that have a natural tendency to excite in the mind, the idea or imagination of that which is the object of the lust, certainly tend to feed and promote that lust. What can be more plain and evident, than that a presenting the object, tends to stir up the appetite? Reason and experience teach this.

Therefore all things, whether they be words or actions, have a tendency and expose to sin, that tend to raise and uphold in the mind, imaginations or ideas, of those things which the lust tends to. It is certainly wrong and unlawful to feed a lust even in the imagination. It is quite contrary to the holy rules of God's word. Prov. xxiv. 9. "The thought of foolishness is sin." Matth. v. 28. "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery." A man, by gratifying his lusts in his imagination and thoughts, may make his soul, in the sight of God, to be a hold of foul spirits; and like a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. And sinful imaginations tend to sinful actions, and outward behavior in the end. Lust is always first conceived in the imagination, and then brought forth in the outward practice. You may see the progress of it in James i. 15. "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin."

Therefore for a man to do those things that tend to excite the objects of his lusts in his imagination, he does that which has as natural a tendency to sin, as a conception has to a birth. And such things are therefore abominable in the sight of a pure and holy God. We are commanded to keep at a great distance from spiritual pollution; and to hate even the very "garment spotted with the flesh." Jude 23.

3. *Those things that are the experience and observation of mankind shew to be ordinarily attended or followed with sin, are of this sort.*

Experience is a good rule to determine by in things of this nature. How is it we know the natural tendency of any thing, but only by observation and experience? Men observe and find, time after time, that such things are commonly attended and followed with such other things. And hence mankind pronounce of them, that they have a natural tendency to them. We have no other way to know the tendency of any thing. Thus men, by observation and experience, know that the warmth of the sun, and showers of rain, are attended with the growth of plants of the earth; and hence they learn, that they have a tendency to it. So they find by experience, that the bite of some kinds of serpents is commonly followed with illness, and often with death. Hence they learn, that the bite of such serpents has a natural tendency to bring disorder upon the body, and exposes to death.

And so, if experience and common observation shows, that any particular practice or custom is commonly attended with that which is very sinful, we may safely conclude, that such a practice tends to sin; that it leads and exposes to it.

Thus we may determine, that tavern haunting and gaming are things that tend to sin; because common experience and observation show, that those practices are attended with a great deal of sin and wickedness. The observation of all ages and all nations, with one voice declares it. It shows, where taverns are much frequented, for drinking and the like, they are especially places of sin, of profaneness, and other wickedness: And it shows, that those towns, where there is much of this, are places where no good generally prevails. And it also shows, that those persons that are given much to frequenting taverns, are most commonly vicious persons. And so of gaming; as playing at cards, experience shows, that those persons that practise this, do generally fall into much sin. Hence these practices are become infamous among all sober, virtuous persons.

4. *Another way by which persons may determine of some things, that they lead and expose to sin, is by their own experience, or what they have found in themselves.*

If persons have found in themselves, from time to time, that they have actually led them into sin, this surely is enough to convince them, that such things do actually lead and expose to sin; for what will convince men, if their own experience will not? Thus if men have found, by undeniable experience, that any practice or custom stirs up lust in them, and has betrayed them into foolish and sinful behavior, or sinful thoughts; they may determine that they lead and expose to sin. Or if they, upon examining themselves, must own, that such a custom or practice has, time after time, had that effect upon them, as to dispose them to sins of omission of known duty; such as secret prayer, and make them more backward to it; and also to indispose them to reading and religious meditation; and they, after they have been doing such or such a thing, have found this has commonly been the effect of it, that they have been more apt to cast off prayer, or has had a tendency to the neglect of family prayer. Or if it seems to lead to unwatchfulness; they find, since they have complied with such a custom, they are less watchful of their hearts, less disposed to any thing that is serious; that the frame of their mind is more light, and their hearts less on the things of another world, and more after vanity; these are sinful effects; and therefore if experience shows a custom or practice to be attended with these things, then experience shows that they lead and expose to sin.

5. *We may determine whether a thing be of an evil tendency, or not, by the effect that an outpouring of the Spirit of God, and a general flourishing of religion, has with respect to it.*

If a pouring out of the Spirit of God on a people, puts a stop to any practice or custom, and roots it out, surely it argues, that that practice or custom is of no good tendency; for if there be no hurt in it, and it tends to no hurt, why should the Spirit of God destroy it? The Spirit of God has no tendency to destroy any thing that is neither sinful, nor has any tendency to sin. Why should it? Why should we suppose

that the Spirit of God should be an enemy to that which has no hurt in it, nor has any tendency to that which is hurtful?

The flourishing of religion has no tendency to abolish or expel any thing that is in no way against religion. That which is not against religion, religion will not appear against. Religion has no tendency to destroy any custom or practice, that has no tendency to destroy that. It is a rule that holds in all contraries and opposites: The opposition is equal on both sides. So contrary as light is to darkness, so contrary is darkness to light. It is equal both ways. So, just so contrary as the flourishing of religion is to any custom, just so contrary is that custom to the flourishing of religion. That custom that religion tends to destroy, that custom, if it prevail, tends also to destroy religion. Therefore, if the flourishing of religion, and the outpouring of the Spirit of God, tends to overthrow any custom that takes place or prevails, we may surely determine, that that custom is either in itself sinful, or tends and exposes to evil.

6. *We may determine, by the effect that a general decay of religion has with respect to them, whether they be things of a sinful tendency or not.*

If they be things that come with a decay of religion, that creep in as that decays, we may determine they are things of no good tendency. The withdrawing of good, does not let in good, but evil. It is evil, not good, comes in, as good gradually ceases. What is it but darkness that comes in as light withdraws.

Therefore, if there be any decay of religion in the town, or in particular persons, and upon this any certain customs or practices take place and are allowed, which were wholly abstained from and renounced when religion was in a more flourishing state, we may safely conclude that such customs and practices are contrary to the nature of true religion; and therefore in themselves sinful, or tending to sin.

7. *We may in many things determine, whether any custom be of a good tendency, by considering what the effect would be, if it was openly and universally owned and practised.*

There are many things that some persons practise somewhat secretly, and are partly hidden in; and that they plead

to be not hurtful; which, if they had suitable consideration to discern what the consequence would be, if every body openly practised the same, it would soon show that the consequence would be confusion, and a most woful state of things. If, therefore, there be any custom, that is of such a nature, that it will not bear universal open practice and profession; but if it should come to *that*, the least consideration will show that the consequence would be lamentable; we may determine that *that* custom is of an ill tendency. For if there is no hurt in it, and it is neither sinful in itself, nor tends to any thing sinful, then it is no matter how open and universal the world is in it; for we need not be afraid of that custom's being too prevalent and universal, that has no ill tendency in it.

Thus I have mentioned some general rules, by which to determine and judge what things are of a bad and sinful tendency. And these things are so plain, that for a person to deny them, would be absurd and ridiculous.

I would now, in the name of God, warn all persons to avoid such things, as appear by these rules to lead and expose to sin. And particularly, I would now take occasion to warn our young people, as they would approve themselves fearers of God, to avoid all such things in company, that, being tried by these rules, will appear to have a tendency or lead to sin. Avoid all such ways of talking and acting as have a tendency to this; and follow the example of Joseph in this.

Not only the most gross acts of uncleanness, but all degrees of lasciviousness, both in talking and acting, are strictly forbidden in scripture, as what should not be so much as once named among saints or Christians, Gal. v. 9. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness." Eph. v. 3, 4, 5. "But fornication, and all uncleanness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints: Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God." We should hate even the garments spotted with the flesh, i. e. should hate and

shun all that in the least approaches to any such thing or savors of it.

And I desire that certain customs that are common among young people in the country, and have been so a long time, may be examined by those rules that have been mentioned. That custom in particular, of young people of different sexes lying in bed together! However light is made of it, and however ready persons may be to laugh at its being condemned: If it be examined by the rules that have been mentioned, it will appear past all contradiction, to be one of those things that lead and expose to sin: And I believe what experience and fact will show of the consequence and event of it, does abundantly bear witness to it. And whoever wisely considers the matter, must say, that this custom of this country (to which it seems to be peculiar, among people that pretend to uphold their credit) has been one main thing that has led to that growth of uncleanness that has been in the land. And so there are other customs and liberties that are customarily used among young people in company, that they that use them know that they lead to sin. They know that they tend to stir up their lusts; that it does do it; and this is the very end for which they do it, to gratify their lusts in some measure. Little do such persons consider, what a holy God they are soon to be judged by, that now make a mock of sin; who abominates the impurities of their hearts.

If, therefore, they do actually stir up and feed lust, then certainly they tend to further degrees and more gross acts. That which stirs up lust, makes it more violent, and does therefore certainly the more expose persons to be overcome by it. How evident and undeniable are these things; and how strange that any should cavil against them, or make a derision of them!

Possibly you may be confident of your own strength, and may think with yourself, that you are not in danger, that there is no temptation in these things, but what you are able easily to overcome. But you should consider, that the most self-confident are most in danger. Peter was very confident, that he should not deny Christ, but how dreadfully otherwise

the event! If when others that have fallen into gross sins, should be inquired of, and should declare how it was with them; doubtless they would say, that they at first thought there was no danger; they were far from the thought that ever they should commit such wickedness; but yet by venturing further and further, they fell at last into the foulest and grossest transgressions. And persons may long withstand temptation, and be suddenly overcome at last. None so much in danger, as the most bold. They are most safe, that are most sensible of their own weakness; and most distrustful of their own hearts, and most sensible of their continual need of restraining grace. Young persons with respect to the sin of uncleanness, are dealt with by the devil, just as some give an account of some sort of serpents charming of birds, and other animals down into their mouths. If the serpent takes them with his eyes, though they seem to be affrighted by it, yet they will not flee away, but will keep the serpent in sight, and approach nearer and nearer to him, till they fall a prey.

Another custom that I desire may be examined by the forementioned rules, is that of young people of both sexes getting together in the night, in those companies for mirth and jollity, that they call frolics; so spending the time together till late in the night, in their jollity. I desire our young people to suffer their ears to be open to what I have to say upon this point; as I am the messenger of the Lord of Hosts to them, and not determine that they will not hearken, before they have heard what I shall say. I hope there are but few persons among us so abandoned, as to determine that they will go on in a practice, whether they are convinced that it is unlawful or not; or though it should be proved to them to be unlawful by undeniable arguments.

Therefore let us examine this custom and practice by what has been said. It has been proved undeniably, that we ought not to go on in a practice that leads and exposes to sin; and rules have been laid down to judge what does thus expose and lead to it, that I think are plain and undeniable.

Therefore, now let us try this custom by these rules, and see whether it will bear the test or not. Certainly a Christ-

ian will not be unwilling to have his practices examined and tried by the rules of reason and God's word; but will rather rejoice in it.

And I desire particularly, that the practice may be tried by that sure touchstone of experience. Let it be tried by the consideration of what is experienced in fact abroad in one town, and place, and another. This is one of the rules of trial that have been mentioned, that that custom that the experience and observation of mankind shows to be ordinarily attended or followed with sin, may be determined and concluded to be unlawful. And if we look abroad in the country, I doubt not but these two things will be found.

1. That as to those towns where there is most of this carried on among young people, (as there is more of it in some places than others) it will be found, as a thing that universally holds, that the young people there are commonly a loose, vain, and irreligious generation; little regarding God, heaven, or hell, or any thing but vanity. And that commonly in those towns where most frolicing is carried on, there are the most frequent breaking out of gross sins; fornication in particular.

2. If we try it by persons: If we go through the country, we shall, for the most part, find, that those persons that are greatest frolicers, are most addicted to this practice which we are speaking of, they are the persons furthest from serious thought, and are the vainest and loosest upon other accounts. And whence should this be, if such a practice was not sinful, or had not a natural tendency to lead persons into sin.

And furthermore, I appeal to the experience of you here present, as to what you have found in yourselves. I desire those of you that have made pretences of serious religion, and saving piety, and have formerly pretended to keep up religion in your closet, and your own souls, that you would seriously ask yourselves, whether or no you have not found, that this practice has indisposed you to serious religion, and taken off your minds from it? Has it not tended to your neglect of secret prayer? Have you not found, that after you have

been to a frolic, you have been more backward to that duty? And, if you have not wholly neglected it, have you not found that you have been abundantly more slightly, and ready to turn it off in any manner, and glad to have done with it? And more backward to reading and serious meditation, and such things? And that your mind has been exceedingly diverted from religion, and that for some time?

I do not send you far off to find out whether this custom be not of bad tendency....not beyond the sea, to some distant country; I send you no further than to your own breast to examine your own experience in this matter; let the matter be determined by that.

And then again, let us try this custom by the effect the outpouring of the Spirit of God on a people has with respect to it. This we are under great advantage to do; because there has lately been here in this place, the most remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God that has ever been in Newengland, and, it may be, in the world, since the apostles' days. And it is known, that before this, that custom of young peoples' frolicing did prevail in the town. And here we all know the effect it had: It put an end to it....It was a custom that was wholly done with....It was altogether laid aside; and was so for several years.

It has been already shown, that there is no account can be given why the Spirit of God, and the flourishing of religion should abolish such a custom, unless it be because that custom is, either in its nature or tendency, an enemy to the Spirit of God and religion.

The fruits of the Spirit of God are good, and I hope there are none that have the blasphemy to say otherwise. And therefore it is good that this custom should be removed; for this is plainly one of the effects of the Spirit of God. And if so, it is because the custom is bad, either in its nature or tendency; otherwise there would be no good in its being removed. The Spirit of God abolished this custom for this reason, because if it had been kept up in the town, it would have had a direct tendency to hinder that work that the Spirit was about to do amongst us. This was undeniably the reason.

Supposing such a custom had been begun and set up by the young people all over the town, in the midst of the time of the late outpouring of the Spirit, all of a sudden, would any wise persons, that have truly the cause of religion at heart, rejoice at it? Would not every one at first thought have concluded, without any hesitation, that it was a thing that looked darkly upon the interest of religion, and there was great danger that it would take off peoples' minds from religion, and make them vain; and so put an end to the flourishing of religion? Would not every considerate person in this town have thought thus of it? And if such a custom would had an ill tendency then so it will now.

Objection. The town is not in such circumstances now as it was then. And though it might have done hurt then, by putting an end to the great concern; yet now it may do no hurt: For there is now no such great concern to be put an end to by it.

Answer. Though the town is not in such circumstances now as it was then, yet it ought to be; there ought to be as much engagedness of mind about religion; as much concern among sinners, and as much engagedness among the godly, as then: And it is to our shame that there is not. And if such a practice would have tended to destroy such a religious concern, then it certainly tends to prevent it now. It is a rule that will hold, that that which has a tendency to destroy a thing when it is, tends to prevent it when it is not. And are we not praying from sabbath to sabbath, and from day to day, for such a concern again? And do not those of you that pretend to be converted, that have lately set up this custom, pray for the same? Are you a convert, a saint, and yet not desire that here should be any more pouring out of the Spirit of God? The town has cause to be ashamed of such converts, if it has any such. And if ye do, why do you do what tends to prevent it?

Again, Let this practice be tried by the effect that a general decay of religion has with respect to it. Now we have a trial; it is now a time that religion is greatly decayed amongst us; and the effect is that this custom comes in with this decay. Young people begin again to set up their old custom of

frolicing, and spending great part of the night in it, to the violation of family orders. What is the reason, if this custom is not bad, either in its nature or tendency, that it did not come in before, when religion was lively ? Why does it stay till it can take the advantage of the withdrawment of religion ? This is a sign that it is a custom that shuns a spirit of lively religion, as darkness shuns the light, and never comes in until light withdraws.

And here again, I would send persons to their own experience. How did this practice come in with you in particular : You that two or three years ago, seemed to be so engaged in religion ? Did it not come in, did you not begin to practise it, as the sense of religion wore off ? And what is the matter ? Why did not you set up the practice then, when your heart was taken up about reading, meditation, and secret prayer to God ? If this do not at all stand in the way of them, and is no hinderance to them, why was you not engaged in both together ? What account can you give of it ? Why did you leave off this practice and custom, or abstain from it ? To what purpose is this changing ? One while it must be avoided as evil, and another while practised and pleaded for as good. The making such an alteration does not look well, nor will it be for the honor of religion in the eye of the world. For whether the practice be lawful or not, yet such a thing will surely be improved to our disadvantage. For your avoiding of it then, has this appearance, in the eye of the country, that then you condemned it; and therefore your now returning to it will appear to them as backsliding in you. Such changelings are ever more in the eye of the world, greatly to the dishonor of the profession they are of, let it be what it will.

Indeed this custom, as it is practised, does not only tend to sin, but is in itself very disorderly, sinful, and shameful. For it is attended late in the night, and in the dead of the night, to the neglect of family prayer, and violating all family order, which is disorder and profaneness. Is it lawful to rob God of his ordinary sacrifices, for the sake of your pleasure, diversion, and jollity ? Are you of that mind that it is a decent thing, that the stated worship of the great God should give

way to your mirth, and your diversions? Is this the way of God's holy children, to talk after this manner? Those works that are commonly done in the dead of the night, seem to have a black mark set upon them by the apostle, and Christians are exhorted to avoid them, Rom. xiii. 12, 13. "Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness; not in chambering and wantonness." The word here rendered rioting, is of far different signification from the term as used in our laws: For the forcible doing, and unlawful thing, by three or more persons assembled together for that purpose. Words, as they are terms in the law, are often used very much beside their common signification. But the word here properly signifies, a disorderly convention of persons to spend their time together in pleasure and jollity. So the word is commonly used in scripture, Prov. xxiii. 20. "Be not amongst riotous eaters of flesh." Prov. xxviii. 7. "He that is a companion of riotous men, shameth his father." Luke xv. 13. "Wasted his substance with riotous living."

Again, a black mark seems to be set on such in scripture, as in 1 Thess. v. 5....8. "Ye are all children of the light, and children of the day: We are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunk, are drunken in the night.

Many of you that have lately set up this practice of frolicing and jollity, profess to be children of the light and of the day; and not to be the children of darkness. Therefore walk as in the day; and do not those works of darkness that are commonly done at unseasonable hours of the night.

Such things are not only condemned by the apostle, but are looked upon as infamous through the world in all ages among sober sort of people; and all past writings show it. Therefore it is a thing of bad report, and so forbidden, Phil. iv. 8. "Whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, any praise, think on these things.

Object. 1. But the wise man allows of this practice, when he says, Eccles. iii. 4. "There is a time to mourn, and a time to dance."

Answer. This is nothing to the purpose; for the utmost that any can pretend that it proves, is denying it to be lawful, and allowing it may be used under some circumstances; but not at all, that dancing and other things used by our young people in their frolics are lawful in those circumstances, any more than what is said in the same chapter, verse 3, "there is a time to kill," proves that it is lawful for a man to commit murder.

To deny that dancing, under any circumstances whatever, was lawful, would be absurd: For there was a religious dancing in the Jewish church, that was a way of expressing their spiritual mirth. So David danced before the Lord. And he calls upon others to praise God in the dance. So there may be other circumstances wherein dancing may not be unlawful. But all this makes nothing to the present purpose; to prove that this particular custom, that we have been speaking of among our young people, is not of a bad tendency. And besides, when the wise man says, there is a time to dance, that does not prove, that the dead of the night is the time for it. The same wise man doth not justify carnal mirth, but condemns it, Eccles. ii. 2. "I said of laughter, it is mad; and of mirth, what doth it?"

Object. 2. If we avoid all such things, it will be the way for our young people to be ignorant how to behave themselves in company.

Answer. But consider what this objection comes to. It certainly comes to this, viz. That the pouring out of the Spirit of God upon a people, tends to banish all good conduct, good breeding, and decent behavior from among them; and to sink them down into clownishness and barbarity. And if such a pouring out of the Spirit of God, as has been amongst us, should be continued, it would tend to have this effect; for that we have seen by experience. The Spirit of God did actually put an end to this practice among us.

But who is it amongst us that is not ashamed to make such an objection? Will any of our young converts talk thus? Will you that think you were converted by the late pouring out of the Spirit of God, and are made holy persons, heirs of eternal life, talk so blasphemously of it?

If our young people are resolute still to go on, notwithstanding all that has been said, I hope that those of them that call themselves converted, will first find out some rational, satisfying answer to the arguments that have been used against it This at least may be reasonably expected of them, seeing they make such a profession. You have this day been partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and therein solemnly renewed your profession.

If after such light set before you, and such mercy given, you will go on, be it known to you, that your eating now, and at other times, will prove only an eating and drinking judgment to yourselves.

And I desire heads of families, if they have any government over their children; or any command of their own houses, would not tolerate their children in such practices, nor suffer such conventions in their houses.

I do not desire that young people should be abridged of any lawful and proper liberties.....But this custom can be of no benefit or service in the world; it tends only to mischief.

Satan doubtless would be glad to have such an interest amongst us as he used to have; and is therefore striving to steal in, while we are sleeping; but let us rouse up ourselves, and vigorously oppose his encroachments.

I shall repeat those words of the apostle, Rom. xiii. 12....14. and leave them to the serious consideration of all persons, old and young: "The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

SERMON III.

Men naturally God's Enemies.

ROMANS V. 10.

FOR IF WHEN WE WERE ENEMIES, WE WERE RECONCILED TO GOD BY THE DEATH OF HIS SON.

THE apostle, from the beginning of the epistle to the beginning of this chapter, hath insisted on the doctrine of justification by faith alone. And having particularly spoken to that, in this chapter he goes on to consider the benefits that are consequent on justification. And there are three that flow from justification, which are here spoken of, viz. peace with God, present happiness, and hope of glory. Peace with God is mentioned in the first verse. "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." In the following verses he speaks of present blessedness, and hope of glory, as benefits accompanying justification. "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

And concerning this benefit of the hope of glory, the apostle does particularly take notice of two things, viz. the blessed nature of this hope, and the sure ground of it.

1. He insists on the blessed nature of this hope, in that it enables us to glory in tribulations. This excellent nature of true Christian hope is described in the following words: "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience, and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy

Ghost, which is given unto us," verse 3....5. q. d. Through hope of a blessed reward, that will abundantly more than make up for all tribulation, we are enabled to bear tribulation with patience; patiently bearing, and patiently waiting for the reward. And patience works experience; for when we thus bear tribulation with patient waiting for the reward, this brings experience of the earnest of the reward, viz. the earnest of the Spirit, in our feeling the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. So that our hope does not make us ashamed; though we do bear tribulation, our hope is not disappointed; for in the midst of our tribulation, we experience those blessed incomes of the Spirit in our souls, that make even a time of tribulation sweet to us; and is such an earnest as abundantly confirms our hope; and so experience works hope.

2. The apostle takes notice of the sure and abundant ground there is for this hope; or the abundant evidence we have, that we shall obtain the glory hoped for, in that peace we have with God, in our justification through Christ's blood: because that while we were without strength, in due time Christ died for us; while we were ungodly and sinners, enemies to God and Christ, verse 6....10. The apostle's argument is exceeding clear and strong: That if God has done already so great a thing for us, as to give us Christ, to die and shed his precious blood for us, which was vastly the greatest thing, we need not doubt but that he will bestow life upon us, after all this is already done. It is but a small thing for God actually to bestow eternal life, after it is purchased, to what it is for him to give his own Son to die, to purchase it. The giving Christ to purchase it, was virtually all; it included the whole grace of God in salvation. When Christ had purchased salvation at such a dear rate, all the difficulty was got through, all was virtually over and done. It is a small thing, in comparison, for God to bestow salvation, after it has been thus purchased at a full price. Sinners that are justified by the death of Christ, are already virtually saved: The thing is, as it were, done; what remains is no more than the necessary consequence of what is done. Christ when he died made an end of sin; and when he rose from the

dead, he did virtually rise with the elect; he brought them up from death with him, and ascended into heaven with them. And therefore, when this is already done, and we are thus reconciled to God through the death of his Son, we need not fear but that we shall be saved by his life. The love of God appears much more in his giving his Son to die for sinners, than in giving eternal life after Christ's death.

The giving of Christ to die for us is here spoken of as a much greater thing, than the actual bestowment of life, on two accounts.

1. That this is all that has any difficulty in it.

2. When God did this for us, he did it for us as sinners and enemies. But in actually bestowing salvation on us after we are justified, we are not looked upon as sinners. After we are justified, God does not look on us any longer as sinners, but as perfectly righteous persons; he beholds no iniquity in us. We are no more enemies, for then we are reconciled. When God gave Christ to die for the elect, he looked on them as they are in themselves; but in actually bestowing eternal life, he does not look on them as they are in themselves, but as they are in Christ.

There are three epithets used in the text and context, as appertaining to sinners as they are in themselves.

1. They are *without strength*, they cannot help themselves, verse 6....8.

2. They are *ungodly*, or sinners.

3. They are *enemies*, as in the text.

DOCTRINE.

Natural Men are God's Enemies.

God, though the Creator of all things, yet has some enemies in the world.

Men in general will own, that they are, or have been sinners. There are few, if any at all, whose consciences are so blinded as not to be sensible they have been guilty of sin. And most sinners will own that they have bad hearts. They will own that they do not love God so much as they should do;

and that they are not so thankful as they ought to be for mercies; and that in many things they fail. And yet few of them are sensible that they are God's enemies. They do not see how they can be truly so called; they are not sensible that they wish God any hurt, or endeavor to do him any.

But we see that the scripture speak of them as enemies to God. So in our text, and elsewhere, "And you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works." Col. i. 21. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." Rom. vii. 7.

And that all natural, or unregenerate men are indeed so, is what I shall endeavor now particularly to show. Which I propose to do in the following method:

1. I shall show, in what respects they are enemies to God.

2. To how great a degree they are enemies.

3. Why they are enemies.

4. I shall answer some objections.

1. I am to show, in what respects they are enemies to God.

1. Their enmity appears in their judgments; in the judgment and esteem they have of God. They have a very mean esteem of God. Men are ready to entertain a good esteem of those with whom they are friends: They are apt to think highly of their qualities, to give them their due praises; and if there be defects, to cover them. But those to whom they are enemies, they are disposed to have mean thoughts of; they are apt to entertain a dishonorable opinion of them; they will be ready to look contemptably upon any thing that is praiseworthy in them.

So it is with natural men towards God. They entertain very low and contemptible thoughts of God. Whatever honor and respect they may pretend and make a show of towards God, if their practice be examined, it will show, that they do certainly look upon him to be a Being, that is but little to be regarded. They think him one that is worthy of very little honor and respect, not worthy to be much taken notice of. The language of their hearts is, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?" Exod. v. 2. "What is the Almighty,

that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?" Job. xxi. 15. They count him worthy neither to be loved nor feared. They dare not behave with that slight and disregard towards one of their fellow creatures, when a little raised above them in power and authority, as they dare and do towards God. They value one of their equals much more than God, and are ten times more afraid of offending such an one, than of displeasing the God that made them. They cast such excceding contempt on God, as to prefer every vile lust before him. And every worldly enjoyment is set higher in their esteem than God. A morsel of meat, or a few pence of worldly gain, is preferred before him. God is set last and lowest in the esteem of natural men.

2. They are enemies in the natural relish of their souls. They have an inbred distaste and disrelish of God's perfections. God is not such a sort of being as they would have. Though they are ignorant of God, yet from what they hear of him, and from what is manifest by the light of nature of God, they do not like him. By his being endowed with such attributes as he is, they have an aversion to him. They hear God is an infinitely holy pure, and righteous Being, and they do not like him upon this account; they have no relish of such kind of qualifications; they take no delight in contemplating them. It would be a mere task, a bondage to a natural man, to be obliged to set himself to contemplate these attributes of God. They see no manner of beauty or loveliness, nor taste any sweetness in them. And upon the account of their distaste of these perfections, they dislike all the other of his attributes. They have greater aversion to him because he is omniscient and knows all things; because his omniscience is an holy omniscience. They are not pleased that he is omnipotent, and can do whatever he pleases; because it is a holy omnipotence. They are enemies even to his mercy, because it is a holy mercy. They do not like his immutability, because by this he never will be otherwise than he is, an infinitely holy God.

It is from this disrelish that natural men have of the attributes of God, that they do not love to have much to do with

God. The natural tendency of the heart of man is to fly from God, and keep at a distance from him; and get as far off as possible from God. A natural man is averse to communion with God, and is naturally disinclined to those exercises of religion wherein he has immediately to do with God. It is said of wicked man, "God is not in all his thoughts." Psal. x. 4. It is evident that the mind of man is naturally averse to thinking about God; and hence, if any thoughts of God be suggested to the mind, they soon go away; such thoughts are not apt to rest in the minds of natural men. If any thing is said to them of God, they are apt to forget it: It is like seed that falls upon the hard path, it does not at all enter in, and the fowls of the air soon catch it away; or like seed that falls upon a rock. Other things will stick; but divine things do, as it were, rebound; and if they were cast into the mind, they meet with that there which soon thrusts them out again; they meet with no suitable entertainment but are soon chased away.

Hence also it is that natural men are so difficultly persuaded to be constant in the duty of secret prayer. They would not be so averse to spending a quarter of an hour, night and morning, in some bodily labor, but it is because they are averse to a work wherein they have so immediately to do with God, and they naturally love to keep at a distance from God.

3. Their wills are contrary to his will. God's will and theirs are exceeding cross the one to the other. God wills those things that they hate, and are most averse to; and they will those things that God hates. Hence they oppose God in their wills; They set up their wills against the will of God. There is a dreadful, violent, and obstinate opposition of the will of natural men to the will of God.

They are very opposite to the commands of God. It is from the enmity of the will, that "the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. vii. 7. Hence natural men are enemies to God's government. They are not loyal subjects, but enemies to God, considered as Lord of the world. They are entire enemies to God's authority.

4. They are enemies to God in their affections. There is in every natural man a seed of malice against God: Yea, there is such a seed of this rooted in the heart of man naturally. And it does often dreadfully break forth and appear. Though it may in a great measure lie hid in secure times, when God lets men alone, and they meet with no great disturbance of body or mind; yet if God does but touch men a little in their consciences, by manifesting to them a little of his wrath for their sins, this often times brings out the principle of malice against God, which is exercised in dreadful heart-risings, inward wranglings and quarrelings, and blasphemous thoughts; wherein the heart is like a viper, hissing, and spitting poison at God. There is abundance of such a principle in the heart. And however free from it the heart may seem to be when let alone and secure, yet a very little thing will set it in a rage. Temptations will show what is in the heart. The alteration of a man's circumstances will often discover the heart: A change of circumstance will bring that out which was hid before. Pharaoh had no more natural enmity against God than other men; and if other natural men had been in Pharaoh's circumstances, the same corruptions would have put forth themselves in as dreadful a manner. The Scribes and Pharisees had naturally no more of a principle of malice in their hearts against Christ than other men; and other natural men would, in their case, and having as little restraint, exercise as much malice against Christ as they did. When wicked men come to be cast into hell, then their malice against God will appear. Then will it appear what dreadful malice they have in their hearts. Then their hearts will appear as full of malice as hell is full of fire. But when wicked men come to be in hell, there will be no new corruptions put into their hearts; but only old ones will then break forth without restraint. That is all the difference between a wicked man on earth and a wicked man in hell, that in hell there will be more to stir up the exercise of corruption, and less to restrain it than on earth; but there will be no new corruption put in. A wicked man will have no principle of corruption in hell, but what he carried to hell with him. There are now

the seeds of all the malice that will be exercised then. The malice of damned spirits is but a branch of the root, that is in the hearts of natural men now. A natural man has a heart like the heart of a devil; but only as corruption is more under restraint in man than in devils.

5. They are enemies in their practice. "They walk contrary to him." Lev. xxvi. 21. Their enmity against God does not lie still, but they are exceeding active in it. They are engaged in a war against God. Indeed they cannot hurt God, he is so much above them; but yet they do what they can. They oppose themselves to his honor and glory: They oppose themselves to the interest of his kingdom in the world: They oppose themselves to the will and command of God; and oppose him in his government. They oppose God in his works, and in his declared designs; while God is doing one work, they are doing the contrary, and as much as in them lies, counter working; God seeks one thing, and they seek directly the contrary. They list under Satan's banner, and are his willing soldiers in his opposing the kingdom of God.

I proceed now,

II. To say something with respect to the degree of this enmity; tending in some measure to show, how great enemies natural men are to God.

1. They have no love to God; their enmity is mere enmity, without any mixture of love. A natural man is wholly destitute of any principle of love to God, and never had the least exercise of this love. Some natural men have had better natural tempers than others; and some are better educated than others; and some live a great deal more soberly than others; but one has no more love to God than another; for none have the least spark of that. The heart of a natural man is as destitute of love to God, as dead, stiff, cold corpse is of vital heat. "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you." John v. 43.

2. Every faculty and principle of action is wholly under the dominion of enmity against God. The nature of man is wholly infected with this enmity against God. He is tainted with it throughout, in all his faculties and principles. And

not only so, but every faculty is entirely and perfectly subdued under it, and enslaved to it. This enmity against God has the absolute possession of the man. The Apostle Paul, speaking of what he was naturally, says, "I am carnal, sold under sin." Rom. vii. 14.

The understanding is under the reigning power of this enmity against God, so that it is entirely darkened and blinded with regard to the glory and excellency of God. The will is wholly under the reigning power of it. All the affections are governed by enmity against God: There is not one affection, nor one desire, that a natural man has, or that he is ever stirred up to act from, but what contains in it enmity against God. A natural man is as full of enmity against God, as any viper, or any venomous beast, is full of poison.

3. The power of the enmity of natural men against God, is so great, that it is insuperable by any finite power. It has too great and strong a possession of the heart, to be overcome by any created power. Natural men cannot overcome their own enmity, let them strive never so much with their own hearts. Indeed, a natural man never sincerely strives to root out his enmity against God; his endeavors are hypocritical: He delights in his enmity, and chooses it. Neither can others do it, though they sincerely, and to their utmost, endeavor to overcome this enmity. If godly friends and neighbors labor to persuade them to cast away their enmity, and become friends to God, they cannot persuade them to it. Though ministers use never so many arguments and entreaties, and set forth the loveliness of God, and tell them of the goodness of God to them, and hold forth to them God's own gracious invitations, and intreat them never so earnestly to cast off their opposition and enmity, and to be reconciled, and become friends, yet they cannot overcome it: Still they will be as bad enemies to God as ever they were. The tongue of men or of angels cannot persuade them to relinquish their opposition to God. Miracles will not do it. How many miracles did the children of Israel see in the wilderness! Yet their enmity against God remained, as appeared by their often murmuring. And how often did Christ use miracles to this end

without effect? But the Jews yet obstinately stood out. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Matth. xxiii. 37. And how great did the enmity of these people appear to be after all; how spiteful and venomous were their hearts towards Christ, as appears to be after all; how spiteful and venomous were their hearts towards Christ, as appears by their cruel treatment of him in his last sufferings!

They are mortal enemies to God, i. e. They have that enmity in their hearts, that strikes at the life of God. A man may be no friend to another, and may have an ill spirit towards him, and yet not be his mortal enemy: His enmity will be satisfied and glutted with something short of the death of the person. But it is not so with natural men with respect to God, they are mortal enemies. Indeed natural men cannot kill God. They have no hope of it, and so make no attempts. It has ever been looked upon so much above their power, that, it may be, it is not thought of. But this is no argument that this is not the tendency of the principle.

Natural men are enemies to the dominion of God; and their nature shows their good will to pull him down out of heaven, and dethrone him if they could! Yea, they are enemies to the being of God, and would be glad if there was no God, and therefore it necessarily follows, that they would kill him, and cause that there should be none, if they could.

"The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God," Psal. xiv. 1. This saying in his heart, there is no God, implies in it, not only an aptness to question the being of God, but it implies that he inclines it should be so. His heart says, i. e. his inclination says. The words in the original are thus: "The fool hath said in his heart, no God." The words, *there is*, are in the original, but were put in by the translators. Now, if we read the words so, "The fool hath said in his heart, no God," they will perhaps show the Psalmist's meaning more fully than as they are now translated. "The fool hath said in his heart, no God," That is, I would have none, I do not

desire any, I wish there was none; that would suit my inclination best. That is the language of the inclinations of a natural man; no God. Let there be no God for me, let me have no God; let the world be emptied of a God, he stands in my way. And hence he is an Atheist in his heart, he is ready to think there is none; and that also is ready to be the language of his heart, "There is no God."

The viper's poison is deadly poison; and when he bites, he seeks the precious life. And men are in this respect a generation of vipers. Their poison, which is enmity against God, seeks the life of God. "O generation of vipers." Matth. iii. 7. "The wicked are estranged from the womb..... Their poison is like the poison of a serpent." Psal. lviii. 3, 4. "For their vine is the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are the grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter. Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps," Deut. xxxii. 32, 33.

The divine nature being immortal, and infinitely out of our reach, there is no other trial possible, whether the enmity that is naturally in the heart against God, be mortal or no, but only for God to take on, him the human nature and become man, so as to come within man's reach, that they should be capable of killing him. There can be no other experiment but this. And this trial there has been. And what has been the event? Why, when once God became man, and came down to dwell here among such vipers as fallen men, they hated him and persecuted him; and never left him till they had imbrued their hands in his blood. There was a multitude of them that appeared combined in this design. Nothing would do, but he must be put to death. All cry out, "Crucify him, crucify him. Away with him." They had rather Barabbas, who greatly deserved death, should live, than he should not die. Nothing would restrain them from it; even all his preaching, and all his miracles; but they would kill him. And it was not the ordinary kind of execution that would satisfy them; but it must be the most cruel, and most ignominious they possibly could invent. And they, in the time of it added to it, and aggravated it as much as ever

they could, by mocking him, and spitting on him, and scourging him. This shows what the nature and tendency of man's enmity against God is; here it appeared in its true colors.

5. Natural men are greater enemies to God than they are to any other being whatsoever. Natural men may be very great enemies to their fellow creatures, but not so great as they are to God. There is no other being that so much stands in sinners way, in those things that they chiefly set their hearts upon, as God. Men are wont to hate their enemies in proportion to two things, viz. their opposition to what they look upon to be their interest, and their power and ability. One that is looked upon a great and powerful enemy, will be more hated than one that is weak and impotent. But none of their enemies are so powerful as God.

Man's enmity to other enemies may be got over: Time may wear it out, and they may be reconciled and be friends. But natural men, without a mighty work of God to change their hearts, will never get over their enmity against God. They are greater enemies to God than they are to the devil. Yea, they treat the devil as their friend and master, and join in with him against God. "Ye are of your father *the devil*, and the lusts of your father ye will do: He was a murderer from the beginning," John viii. 44.

I now proceed,

III. To show why, or on what account they are enemies to God.

The general reason is, That God is opposite to them in the worship of their idols.

The apostacy of man does summarily consist in departing from the true God to idols; forsaking his Creator, and setting up other things in his room.

When God at first created man, he was united to his Creator; the God that made him was his God. The true God was the object of his highest respect, and had the possession of his heart. Love to God was the principle in his heart, that ruled over all other principles; and every thing in the soul was wholly in subjection to it. But when man fell, he departed from the true God, and the union that was between

his heart and his Creator was broken: He wholly lost the principle of love he had to God. And henceforward man slave to other gods. He gave that respect to the creature which is due to the Creator. When God ceased to be the object of his supreme love and respect, other things of course became the objects of it.

Man will necessarily have something that he respects as his God. If man does not give his highest respect to the God that made him, there will be something else that has the possession of it. Men will either worship the true God, or some idol: It is impossible it should be otherwise; something will have the heart of man. And that which a man gives his heart to, may be called his god; and therefore, when man by the fall extinguished all love to the true God, he set up the creature in his room.

And so man came to be at enmity against the true God. For having lost his esteem and love of the true God, and set up other gods in his room, and in opposition to him; and God still demanding their worship, and opposing them in their worship of those false gods; and man continuing still to worship idols, enmity necessarily follows.

That which a man chooses for his god, he sets his heart mainly upon. And nothing will so soon excite enmity as opposition in that which is dearest. A man will be the greatest enemy to him who opposes him in what he chooses for his god: He will look on none as standing so much in his way, as he that would deprive him of his god. "Ye have taken away my gods; and what have I more?" Judg. xviii. 24. A man in this respect cannot serve two masters that stand in competition for his service. And not only if he serves one, he cannot serve the other, but if he cleaves to one he will necessarily hate the other. "No man can serve two masters: For either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon," Matth. vi. 24. And this is the very reason that men hate God. In this case it is as when two kings set up in one kingdom in opposition one to the other; and they both challenge the same throne, and are competitors for the

same crown; they that are loyal, hearty subjects to the one, will necessarily be enemies to the other. It always happens so, nor indeed can it be otherwise.

As that which is a man's god, is the object of his highest love; so that God, who chiefly opposes him in it, must be the object of his greatest hatred.

The gods which a natural man worships, instead of the God that made him, are himself and the world. He has withdrawn his esteem and honor from God, and proudly exalts himself as Satan did: He was not willing to be in such subjection; and therefore rebelled, and set up himself for God. So a natural man in the proud and high thoughts he has of himself, sets up himself upon God's throne. And he gives his heart to the world, worldly riches, and worldly pleasures, and worldly honors; they have the possession of that regard which is due to God. The apostle sums up all the idolatry of wicked men in their love of the world. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." 1 John ii. 15, 16. And the Apostle James observes, that a man must necessarily be the enemy of the true God, if he be a friend of the world. "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God." James iv.

All the sin that men commit, is what they do in the service of their idols: There is no one act of sin, but what is an act of service to some false god. And therefore wherein soever God opposes sin in them, he is opposite to their worship of their idols; on which account they are enemies to God.

God opposes them in their service of their idols in the following respects.

1. He manifests his utter abhorrence of their worship of their idols. Their idols are what they love above all things; they would by no means part with them. This wickedness is sweet unto them, Job xx. 12. If you take them away what have they more? If they lose their idols, they lose their

all. To rend away their idols from them would be more grievous to them, than to rend body and soul asunder; it is like rending their heart in twain. They love their idolatry; but God does not approve of it, but exceedingly hates it; he hates it implacably, and will by no means be reconciled to it; and therefore they hate him. God declares an infinite hatred of every act of sin which they do; or every act that they do in the service of their false gods. He approves of it in no part, but hates it all. He declares himself to be an holy God, and a jealous God; a God that is very jealous of his own honor; and that greatly abhors the giving that honor to another.

2. He utterly forbids their cleaving to those idols, and all the service that they do to them. He not only shows that he dislikes it, but he utterly forbids it; and demands that they should worship him, and serve him only, and give their hearts wholly to him, without tolerating any competitor. He allows them to serve their idols in no degree; but requires them to cast them away utterly, and pay no more worship to them at any time. He requires a final parting with their idols. Not only that they should refrain from them for a while, but cast them away forever, and never gratify their idolatrous respect to them any more. This is so exceeding contrary to them, and what they are so averse to, and so obstinate in their refusal of, that they are enemies to God for it. They cannot endure God's commands, because they forbid all that which their hearts are so engaged in. And as they hate God's command's, so they hate him whose commands they are.

3. He threatens them with everlasting damnation for their service of their idols. He threatens them for their past idolatry. He threatens them with his eternal wrath, for their having departed from him, and their having chosen to themselves other gods. He threatens them for that disposition they have in their hearts to cleave to other gods: He threatens the least degrees of that respect which they have in their hearts to their idols. He manifests that he will not tolerate any regard to them, but has fixed eternal death, as the wages of every degree of it. And he will not release them from their guilt; he holds them to their obligations; he will not acquit

them at all; and he will accept of no atonement that they can make. He will not forgive them, whatever they do in religion; whatever pains they take; whatever tears they shed. He will accept of no money or price that they have to offer.

And he threatens every future act of their idolatry. He not only forbids them ever to be guilty of the least act, but forbids them on pain of eternal damnation. So strictly does God prohibit them from the service of their idols, that are so dear to them, that are their all, and which they would on no account part with. He threatens them with everlasting wrath for all exercises of inordinate love of worldly profit; for all manifestations of inordinate regard to worldly pleasures, or worldly honors. He threatens them with everlasting torments for their selfexaltation. He requires them to deny themselves, and renounce themselves, and to abase themselves at his feet, on pain of bearing his wrath to all eternity.

The strictness of God's law is a principal cause of man's enmity against God. If God were a God that did not so much hate sin; if he were one who would allow them in the gratification of their lusts, in some degree: And his threatenings were not so awful against all indulgence of their lust; if his threatenings were not so absolute; if his displeasure could be appeased by a few tears, and a little reformation, or the like; they would not be so great enemies, nor hate him so much as they do now. But God shows himself to be an implacable enemy to their idols, to every degree of their service of them; and has threatened everlasting wrath, infinite calamity for all that they do in the service of their lusts; and holds them bound under his wrath therefor. And this makes them irreconcilable enemies to him.

For this reason the Scribes and Pharisees were such bitter enemies to Christ, because he showed himself to be such an enemy to their pride, and conceit of their own wisdom, and their selfrighteousness, and inordinate affection of their own honor, which was their God. Natural men are enemies to God, because he is so opposite to them in that in which they place their all. If you go to take away that which is very dear to a man, nothing will provoke him more. God is infi-

nitely opposite to that in which natural men place all their delight, and all their happiness, viz. their gods. He is an enemy to that which natural men value as their greatest honor and highest dignity; and which they trust wholly to, that which is all their dependence, viz. their own righteousness.

Hence natural men are greater enemies to God than they are to any other being. Some of their fellow creatures may stand very much in their way with regard to some things they set their hearts upon; but God opposes them with respect to all their idols, and those gods which are their all. And then God's opposition to their idols, which are above all things dear to them, is infinitely great. None of our fellow creatures ever oppose us in any of our interests so much as God opposes wicked men in their idolatry; for God has an infinite opposition against it. His infinite opposition is manifested by his threatening an infinite punishment, viz. his dreadful wrath to all eternity, misery without end. Hence we need not wonder that natural men are enemies to God.

Having thus shown, in some measure, why natural men are God's enemies, I proceed to the last thing proposed.

IV. To consider and make answer to some objections, that some may be ready to make against this.

Natural men do not generally conceive themselves to be so bad: They have not this notion of themselves, that they are enemies to God. And therefore when they hear such doctrine as this taught them, they stand ready to make objections.

Object. 1. Some natural men may be ready to say, I do not know that I feel any such enmity in my heart against God as is spoken of. I am not sensible that I am such a dreadful enemy, so as to hate God, and to have a mortal enmity against him; and to have a disposition, if I could, to kill him. I feel no such thing in myself, and why should I think that I have such a thing in me? If I have such enmity, why do not I feel it? If I am a mortal enemy, why should I not know it better than any body else? How can others see what is in my heart better than I myself? If I hate one of my fellow creatures, and have a spirit against him, I can feel it inwardly working. To such an objection I would,

Use. 1. If you do but observe yourself, and search your own heart, unless you are strangely blinded, you may be sensible of these things wherein enmity does fundamentally consist. As particularly, you may be sensible that you have at least had a low and contemptible esteem of God; and that you in your esteem set the trifles and vanities of this world far above him; so as to esteem the enjoyment of these things far before the enjoyment of God, and to value these things better than his love. And you may be sensible that you despise the authority of God, and value his commands and his honor but very little. Or if by some means you have blinded yourself now, so as to think you do regard them now, doubtless you can look back and see that you have not regarded them. You may be sensible that you have had a disrelish and aversion towards God; an opposition to thinking of God, or to have any thing to do with him; so that it would have been a very uncomfortable task to have been confined to it for any time; and that when the vanities of the world, at the same time, have been very pleasing to you; and you have been all swallowed up in them, while you have been averse to the things of religion.

If you look into your heart, it is there plain to be seen, that there in an enmity in your will, that your will is contrary to God's will; for you have been opposing the will of God all your life long. These things are plain in natural men; it is nothing but some great delusion that can hide them from you. And these things are the foundation of all enmity; if these things be in you, all the rest that we have spoken of will follow of course.

2. One reason why you have not more sensibly felt the exercises of malice against God is, that your enmity is now exercised partly in your unbelief of God's being; and this prevents its appearing in other ways, that otherwise it would. Man has naturally a principle of Atheism in him; an indisposition to realize God's being, and a disposition to doubt of it. The being of God does not ordinarily seem real to natural men. All the discoveries that there are of God's being, in his works, will not overcome the principle of Atheism that is

in the heart. And though they seem in some measure to be rationally convinced, yet it does not appear real; the conviction is faint, there is no strong conviction impressed on the mind, that there is a God: And oftentimes they are ready to think that there is none. Now this will prevent the exercise of this enmity that otherwise would be felt; particularly, it may be an occasion of there not being those sensible exercises of hatred, that otherwise there would be.

It may in some measure be illustrated by this: If you had a rooted malice against another man, a principle that had been long established there; if you should hear that he was dead, and so should conceive that he had no being, the sensible workings of your malice would not be felt, as when you realized it that he was alive, or that there was such a person; and that although there be the same thing in the foundation, which would appear, if you should afterwards hear the news contradicted, and perceive that your enemy was still alive; you would feel the same workings of hatred that you did before. And when you thought he was dead, you might feel the exercise of your enmity, in being glad of it. And thus your not realizing it, that God has a being, may prevent those sensible workings of hatred, that otherwise you would have. If wicked men in this world were sensible of the reality of God's being, as the wicked are in another, they would feel more of that hatred, that men in another world do. The exercise of corruption in one way, may, and often does prevent it working in other ways. As covetousness may prevent the exercise of pride, so atheism may prevent malice; and yet it may be no argument of there being any the less of a principle of enmity in the heart; for it is the same enmity working in another way. The same enmity that in this world works by atheism, will in another world where there will be no room for Atheism, work by malice and blasphemy. The same mortal enmity that, if you saw there was a God, might make you to wish him dead, and to desire, if it were possible, to kill him, may now dispose and incline to think there is none. Men are very often apt to think things are so as they would have them to be. The same principle disposes you to

think God has no life, which, if you knew he had, would dispose you, if it were possible, to take it away.

3. If you think that there is a God, yet you do not realize it, that he is such a God as he is. You do not realize it, that he is so holy a God as he is: You do not realize it, that he has such an hatred of sin as indeed he has. You do not realize it, that he is so just a God as he is, that will by no means clear the guilty. But that in the Psalms is applicable to you: "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence: Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." Psal. l. 21. So that if you think there is a God, you do not think there is such a God as there is. And your atheism appears in this, as well as in thinking there is no God. For that God that you think there is, is not that God that indeed is, but another, one of your own feigning, the fruit of your own vain, deluded imagination. So that your objection arises from this, that you do not find such a sensible hatred against that God which you have formed, to suit yourself; a god that you like better than the true God. But this is no argument that you have not bitter enmity against the true God; for it was your enmity against the true God, and your not liking him, that has put you upon forming up another in your imagination, that you like better. It is your enmity against those attributes of God's holiness and justice, and the like, that has put you upon conceiting another, who is not so holy as he is, and does not hate sin so much, and will not be so strictly just in punishing it; and whose wrath against sin is not so terrible.

But if you was sensible of the vanity of your own conceits, and that God was not such an one as you have imagined; but that he is, as he is indeed, an infinitely holy, just, sin hating, and sin revenging God, who will not tolerate nor endure the worship of idols, you would be much more liable to feel the sensible exercises of enmity against him, than you are now. And this experience confirms. For we see that when men come to be under convictions, and to be made sensible that God is not as they have heretofore imagined; but that he is such a jealous, sin hating God, and whose wrath against sin is so dreadful, they are much more apt to have sensible exercises of enmity against God than before.

4. Your having always been taught that God is infinitely above you, and out of your reach, has prevented your enmity's being exercised in those ways that otherwise it would have been. You have always from your infancy been taught, that God is so high, that you cannot hurt him; that notion has grown up with you. And hence you be not sensible, that you have any disposition to hurt him; because it has been conceived so impossible, that it has not come into your mind. And hence your enmity has not been exercised in revengeful thoughts; because revenge has never found any room here; it has never found any handle to take hold of; there has been no conception of any such thing, and hence it has lain still. A serpent will not bite, or spit poison at that which it sees at a great distance; which if it saw near, would do it immediately. Opportunity shows what men be often times, whether friends or enemies. Opportunity to do, puts men in mind of doing; wakens up such principles as lay dormant before. Opportunity stirs up desire to do, where there was before a disposition that without opportunity would have lain still. If a man has had an old grudge against another, and has a fair opportunity to be revenged, this will revive his malice, and waken up a desire of revenge.

If a great and sovereign prince injures a poor man, and though what he does is looked upon very cruel, that will not ordinarily stir up that passionate revenge, as if he sustained no bigger an injury from one of his equals, because he is so much above him, and out of his reach. Many a man that has appeared calm and meek when he has had no power in his hands, and has not appeared, either to himself or others, to have any disposition to these and those cruel acts; that yet afterwards, when he came to have opportunity by unexpected advancement or otherwise, has appeared like a ravenous wolf, or devouring lion. So it was with Hazael. "And Hazael said, why weepeth my lord? And he answered, because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: Their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child. And Hazael said, but what

thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing! And Elisha answered, the Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria." 2 Kings viii. 12, 13. Hazael was then a servant; he had no power in his hands to do as he pleased; and so that cruel disposition that was in him had lain hid, and he did not himself imagine that it was there: But afterwards, when he became king of Syria and was absolute, and had none to control him; then it broke out and appeared, and he did as the prophet had foretold. He committed those very acts of cruelty, that he thought it was not in his heart to do. And it was want of opportunity that was the thing that made the difference. It was all in his heart before: He was such a dog then as to do this thing, but only had not had opportunity. And therefore when he seems supprised that the prophet should say so of him, all the reason the prophet gives is, "The Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria."

And some natural men are such dogs as to do things, if they had opportunity, which they do not imagine it is in their hearts to do. You object against your having a mortal hatred against God; that you never felt any desire to kill him. But one reason has been, that it has always been conceived so impossible by you, and you have been so sensible how much desires would be in vain, that it has kept down such a desire. But if the life of God were within your reach, and you knew it, it would not be safe one hour. Who knows what thoughts would presently arise in your heart by such an opportunity, and what disposition would be raised up in your heart! Who would trust your heart, that there would not presently be such thoughts as these, though they are enough to make one tremble to mention them? "Now I have opportunity to set myself at liberty.....that I need not be kept in continual slavery by the strict law of God. Then I may take my liberty to walk in that way I like best and need not be continually in such slavish fear of God's displeasure. And God has not done well by me in many instances. He has done most unjustly by me, in holding me bound to destruction for unbelief, and other things which I cannot help.....He has shown mercy to others, and re-

fused it to me. I have now an opportunity to deliver myself, and there can be no danger of my being hurt for it: God will not be alive to revenge it. And then there will be no God for us to be terrified about, and so keep us in slavery."

Who would trust your heart, that such thoughts would not arise? And others much more horrid! Too dreadful to be mentioned! And therefore I forbear. Those natural men are foolishly insensible of what is in their own hearts, who think there would be no danger of any such workings of heart, if they knew they had opportunity.

5. You little consider how much your having no more of the sensible exercises of hatred to God, is owing to a being restrained by fear. You have always been taught what a dreadful thing it is to hate God. And you have been taught what a dreadful being God is, and how terrible God's displeasure is; that God sees the heart, and knows all the thoughts; and that you are in his hands, and he can make you as miserable as he pleases, and as soon as he pleases. And these things have restrained you: And the fear that has risen from these things, has kept you from appearing what you are; it has kept down your enmity, and made that serpent afraid to show its head, as otherwise it would do. If a man were wholly under the power of an enemy, though he were never so much of an enemy to him, he would be afraid to exercise his hatred in outward acts, unless it were with great disguise.... And if it be supposed that such an enemy, in whose power he was, could see his heart, and know all his thoughts, and apprehended that he would put him to a terrible death, if he saw the workings of malice there, how greatly would this restrain! He would be afraid so much as to believe himself, that he hated his enemy; but there would be all manner of smothering, disguise, and hypocrisy, and feigning even of thoughts and affections.

Thus your enmity has been kept under restraint; and thus it has been from your infancy. You have grown up in it, so that it has become an habitual restraint. You dare not so much as think you hate God. If you do exercise hatred, you have a disguise for it, whereby you endeavor even to hide it

from your own conscience; and so have all along deceived yourself. And your deceit is very old and habitual; and hence you are so difficultly convinced. But this has been only restraint: It has been no mortification. But there has been an enmity against God in its full strength. It has been only restrained like an enemy that durst not rise up and show himself.

6. One reason why you have not felt more sensible hatred to God, may be because you have not had much trial of what is in your heart. It may be God has hitherto in a great measure, let you alone. The enmity that is in men's hearts against God, is like a serpent, which, if he be let alone, lies still; but if any body disturbs it, will soon hiss, and be enraged, and show its serpentine spiteful nature.

Notwithstanding the good opinion you have of yourself, yet a little trial would show you to be a viper, and your heart would be set all on rage against God. One thing that restrains you now is your hope. You hope to receive many things from God. Your own interest is concerned; you hope to make great gains of God. So that both hope and fear operate together, to restrain your enmity from such sensible exercises as otherwise would be. But if once hope were gone, you would soon show what you were: You would soon feel your enmity against God in a rage.

7. If you pretend that you do not feel enmity against God, and yet act as an enemy, you may certainly conclude, that it is not because you are no enemy, but because you do not know your own heart. Actions are the best interpreters of the disposition: They show, better than any thing else, what the heart is. It must be because you do not observe your own behavior, that you question whether you are an enemy to God.

What other account can you give of your own carriage, but only your being God's enemy? What other can be given of your so opposing God in your ways; walking so exceeding contrary to him, contrary to his counsels, contrary to his commands, and contrary to his glory? What other account can be given of your casting so much contempt upon God; your setting him so low; your acting so much against his authority, and against his kingdom and interest in the world?

What other account can be given of your so setting your will in opposition to God's will, and that so obstinately, for so long a time, against so many warnings as you have had? What other account can be given of your joining so much with Satan, in the opposition he is making to the kingdom of God in the world? And that you will join with him against God, though it be so much against your own interest, and though you expose yourself by it to everlasting misery?

Such like behavior in one man towards another, would be looked on as sufficient evidence of a man's being an enemy to another. If he should be seen to behave thus from time to time, and that it was his constant manner, none would want any better evidence, that he was an enemy to his neighbor. If you yourself had a servant that carried it towards you, as you do towards God, you would not think there was need of any greater evidence of his being your enemy. If your servant should manifest so much contempt of you; should disregard your commands as much as you do the commands of God; and should go so directly contrary; should in so many ways act the very reverse of your commands; and should seem to set himself in ways that were contrary to your will so obstinately and incorrigibly, without any amendment from your repeated calls and warnings, and threatenings; and should act so cross to you day and night, as you do to God; when you sought one thing, he would seek the contrary; when you did any work, he would, as much as in him lay, undo and destroy your work; and should continually drive at such ends, as tended to overthrow the ends you aimed at; when you sought to bring to pass any design, he would endeavor to overthrow your design; and should set himself as much against your interest, as you do yourself against God's honor. And you should moreover see him, from time to time, with others that were your declared mortal enemies; and making them his counsellors so much as you do the devils, God's declared mortal enemies: And hearkening to their counsels, as much as you do to Satan's temptations: Should you not think you had sufficient evidence that he was your enemy indeed?

Therefore consider seriously your own ways, and weigh your own behavior. "How canst thou say, I am not polluted? See thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done, Jer. iii. 23.

Object. II. Natural men may be ready to object, the respect they show to God, from time to time. This makes many to think that they are far from being such enemies to God. They carry it respectfully towards God: They pray to him in secret, and do it in as humble a manner as they are able. They attend on public worship, and take a great deal of pains to do it in a decent manner. It seems to them that they show God a great deal of respect; they use many very respectful terms in their prayer; they give him all the honor they can; they are respectful in their manner of speaking, and in their voice, and their gestures, and the like.

But to this, I

Answer, That all this is done in mere hypocrisy. All this seeming respect is feigned, there is no sincerity in it; there is external respect but no respect in the heart; there is a show, and nothing else. You only cover your enmity with a painted vail. You put on the disguise of a friend, but in your heart you are a mortal enemy for all that. There is external honor, but inward contempt; there is a show of friendship and regard, but inward hatred. You do but deceive yourself with your show of respect, and endeavor to deceive God; not considering God looks not on the outward appearance, but he looks on the heart.

Here consider particularly.

1. That much of that seeming respect which natural men show to God, is owing to their education. They have been taught from their infancy that they ought to show great respect to God They have been taught to use respectful language, when speaking about God, and to behave with solemnity, when attending on these exercises of religion, wherein they have to do with God. They, from their childhood, have seen that this is the manner of others, when they pray to God, to use reverential expressions, and a reverential behavior before him. And their show of respect, which they make to God, is owing, in a great measure, to this.

Those who are brought up in places where they have commonly, from their infancy, heard men take the name of God in vain, and swear, and curse, and blaspheme; they learn to do the same, and it becomes habitual to them so to do. And it is the same way, and no other that you have learned to behave respectfully towards God; not that you have any more respect to God than they; but they have been brought up one way, and you another. In some parts of the world, men are brought up in the worship of idols of silver, and gold, and wood, and stone, made in the shape of men and beasts. "They say of them, Let the men that sacrifice, kiss the calves," Hos. xiii. 2. In some parts of the world they are brought up to worship serpents, and are taught from their infancy to carry it with great respect to them And in some places they are brought up in worshipping the devil, who appears to them in a bodily shape; and to behave with a show of great reverence and honor towards him. And what respect you show to God has no better foundation; it comes the same way, and is worth no more.

2. That show of respect which you make is forced. You come to God, and make a great show of respect to him, and use very respectful terms, with a respectful, reverential tone and manner of speaking; and your countenance is grave and solemn; and you put on an humble aspect; and you kneel, and use humble, respectful postures, out of fear. You are afraid that God will execute his wrath upon you; and so you feign a great deal of respect, that he may not be angry with you. "Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee," Psal. lxvi. 3. In the original it is, "shall thine enemies lie to thee." It is rendered therefore in the margin, "shall yield feigned obedience unto thee." All that you do in religion is forced and feigned. Through the greatness of God's power, you yield feigned obedience. You are in God's power, and he is able to destroy you; and so you feign a great deal of respect to him, that he might not destroy you. As one might do towards an enemy that had taken him captive, though he at the same time would

gladly make his escape, if he could, by taking away the life of him who had taken him captive.

3. It is not real respect that moves you to behave so towards God; you do it because you hope you shall get by it. It is respect to yourself, and not respect to God, that moves you. You hope to move God to bestow the rewards of his children by it. You are like the Jews who followed Christ, and called him Rabbi, and would make him a king. Not that they honored him so much in their hearts, as to think him worthy of the honor of a king, or that they had the respect of sincere subjects; but they did it for the sake of the loaves. "Jesus perceived that they would come and take him by force to make him a king. And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus answered, and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because you saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled." John vi. 15.....25, 26.

These things do not argue but that you are implacable enemies to God notwithstanding. If you examine your prayers and other duties, your own consciences will tell you that the seeming respect which you have shown to God in them, has been only in hypocrisy. That oftentimes you have set forth in your prayers, that God was a great God, and glorious God, an infinitely holy God, as if you greatly honored him on the account of these attributes; and you, at the same time, had no sense in your heart of the greatness and gloriousness of God, or of any excellency in his holiness. And so your own consciences will tell you, that you have often pretended to be thankful; you have told God, that you thanked him that you was alive, and thanked him for these and those mercies, when you have not found the least jot of thankfulness in your heart. And so you have told God of your own unworthiness, and set forth what a vile creature you was, when you have had no humble sense of your own unworthiness.

And if these forementioned restraints were thrown off, you would soon throw off all your show of respect. Take away fear, and take away a regard to your own interest, and

there would soon be an end to all those appearances of love, honor and reverence, which now you make. All these things are not at all inconsistent with the most implacable enmity.

The devil himself made a show of respect to Christ, when he was afraid that he was going to torment him; and when he hoped to persuade Christ to spare him longer. "When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of God most high? I beseech thee torment me not." Luke viii. 28.

Object. III. Some may perhaps object against this doctrine of their being God's enemies, the religious affections they have sometimes experienced. They may be ready to say, That when they have come before God in prayer, they have not only used respectful terms and gestures, but they have prayed with affection; their prayers have been attended with tears, which they are ready to think showed something in the heart.

Answer. These affections have risen from other causes, and not from any true respect to God.

As particularly.

1. They have risen from selflove, and not love to God. If you have wept before God, from the consideration of your own pitiful case, that has been because you loved yourself, and not because you had any respect to God. And if your tears have been from sorrow for your sins, you have mourned for your sins, because you have sinned against yourself, and not because you have sinned against God. "When you fasted and mourned, did ye at all fast unto me, even unto Me?" Zech. vii. 5.

2. Pride and a good thought of themselves, very commonly has a great hand in the affections of natural men. They have a good opinion of what they are doing when they are praying; and the reflection on that affects them; they are affected with their own goodness. Man's selfrighteousness often occasions tears. An high opinion of themselves before God, and an imagination of their being persons of great account with him, has affected them in their transactions with God.

There is commonly abundance of pride in the midst of tears, and pride is, in a great measure, the source of them.

And then they are so far from being an argument that you be not an enemy to God, that on the contrary, they are an argument that you be. In your very tears, you are in a vain conceit of yourself, exalting yourself against God.

3. The affections of natural men do often arise from wrong conceits that they have of God. They conceive of God, after the manner they do of men, as though he were a being liable to be wrought upon in his affections. They conceive of him as one whose heart could be drawn, whose affections can be overcome by what he sees in them. They conceive of him as being taken with them and their performances; and this works on their affections; and thus one tear draws another, and their affections increase by reflection. And oftentimes they conceive of God as one that loves them, and is a friend to them; and such a mistake may work much on their affections. But such affections that arise towards God, as they conceit him to be, is no argument that they have not the same implacable hatred towards God, considered as he really is. There is no concluding that men are not enemies, because they are affected and shed tears in their prayers, and the like. Saul was very much affected when *David* expostulated with him about pursuing after him, and seeking to kill him. David's words wrought exceedingly upon Saul's affections. "And it came to pass when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my Son David? And Saul lifted up his voice and wept," 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, and chap. xxvi. 1. &c. He was so affected that he wept aloud, and called David his Son, though he was just before seeking his life. But this affection of Saul's was no argument that he did not still continue in his enmity against David. He was David's mortal enemy before, and sought his life, and so he did afterwards. It was but a pang; his enmity was not mortified or done away. The next news we hear of Saul is, that he was pursuing David, and seeking his life again.

APPLICATION.

This shall be of instruction, in several inferences,

Inf. I. If it be so that natural men are God's enemies, then hence we may learn, how much we are indebted to God

for his restraining grace. If all natural men are God's enemies, what would they not do if they were not restrained! For what has one that is an enemy within himself, or in his disposition to restrain him from acting against him that he is an enemy to? Hatred will not restrain a man from acting any thing whatsoever against him that is hated. Nothing is too bad for hatred, if it be mere hatred, and no love; nothing is too bad for that to do towards the object of it. Hatred shows no kindness either in doing or forbearing. Only hatred will never make a man forbear to act any thing whatsoever against God; for the very nature of hatred is to seek evil. But wicked men as has been shown, are mere enemies to God. They have hatred, without any love at all. And hence natural men have nothing within them, in their own nature to restrain them from any thing that is bad, be it never so bad; and therefore their restraint must not be owing to nature, but to restraining grace. And therefore whatever wickedness we have been kept from, it is not because we have not been bad enough to commit it; but it is God has restrained us, and kept us back from sin. There can be no worse principle than a principle of hatred to God. The devils in hell do not do any thing from any worse principle than this. And there can be no principle that will go further in wickedness than this, if it be neither mortified nor restrained. But it is not mortified in natural men; and therefore all that keeps them from any degree of wickedness is restrained. If we have seen others do things that we never did; and if they have done worse than we, this is owing to restraining grace. If we have not done as bad as Pharaoh, it is owing to divine restraints. If we have not done as bad as Judas, or as the Scribes and Pharisees, or as bad as Herod, or Simon Magus, it is because God has restrained our corruption. If we have ever heard or read of any that have done worse than we; if we have not gone the length in sinning that the most wicked pirates or carnal persecutors have gone, this is owing to restraining grace. For we are all naturally the enemies of God as much as they. If we have not committed the unpardonable sin, it is owing to restraining grace. There is no worse principle

in exercise in that sin, than enmity against God. There is the entire fountain, and all the foundation of the sin against the Holy Ghost, in that enmity against God that we all have in us, and naturally reigns in us.

It is not we ourselves that restrain ourselves from the commission of the greatest imaginable wickedness; for enmity against God reigns in us and over us; we are under the power and dominion of it, and are sold under it. We do not restrain that which reigns over us. A slave, as long as he continues a mere slave, cannot control his master. "He that committeth sin, is the servant of sin." Job viii. 34. So that the restraint of this our cruel tyrant is owing to God and not to us. What does a poor impotent subject do to restrain the absolute lord that has him wholly under his power?

How much will it appear that the world is indebted to the restraining grace of God, if we consider that the world is full of enemies to God! The world is full of inhabitants; and almost all are God's enemies, his implacable and mortal enemies. What therefore would they not do; what work would they not make if God did not restrain them?

God's work in the restraint that he exercises over a wicked world, is a glorious work. God's holding the reins upon the corruptions of a wicked world and setting bounds to their wickedness, is a more glorious work than his ruling the raging of the sea, and setting bounds to its proud waves, and saying, *hitherto shalt thou come and no further*. In hell God lets the wickedness of wicked spirits have the reins to rage without restraint; and it would be in a great measure upon earth as it is in hell, did not God restrain the wickedness of the world.

But in order to the better understanding how it is owing to the restraining grace of God, that we are kept and withheld from the highest acts of sin, I would here observe several things.

1. Whenever men are withheld from sinning by the common influence of God's Spirit, they are withheld by restraining grace. If sinners are awakened sinners, and are made sensible of the great guilt that sin brings, and that it exposes to a dreadful punishment; they, under such circumstances,

dare not allow themselves in wilful sin: God restrains them by the convictions of his Spirit; and therein their being kept from sin is owing to restraining grace. And sinners that live under the gospel, that are not awakened sinners, but in a great measure secure, yet commonly have some degrees of the influence of God's Spirit, with his ordinances influencing natural conscience. And though they be not sufficient thoroughly to rouse them out of security, or make them reform, yet they keep them from going such lengths in sin, as otherwise they might do. And when it is thus, this is restraining grace. They are very stupid and sottish, yet they would be a great deal more so, if God should let them wholly alone.

2. All the restraints that men are under from the word and ordinances, is from restraining grace. The word and ordinances of God might have some degree of influence on men's natural principles of selflove, to restrain them from sin, without any degree of the influence of God's Spirit; but this would be the restraining grace of God; for God's goodness to a sinful world, appears in his giving his word to be a restraint on the wickedness of the world. When men are restrained by fear of those punishments that the word of God threatens; or by the warnings of the word, or by the offers and promises of it; when the word of God works upon hope, or upon fear, or natural conscience, to restrain men from sin, this is the restraining grace of God. When we are restrained thus, it is owing to the mercy of God that we are restrained. It is an instance of God's mercy, that he has revealed hell to restrain men's wickedness; and that he has revealed a way of salvation and a possibility of eternal life. This is a thing that has great influence on men to restrain them from sin; and this is the restraining grace of God.

3. When men are restrained from sin by the light of nature, this also is restraining grace. If men are destitute of the light of God's word, yet the light of natural conscience teaches, that sin brings guilt, and exposes to punishment. The light of nature teaches, that there is a God who governs the world, and will reward the good and punish the evil. When men are restrained by this, they are to attribute their

restraints to the restraining grace of God; for it is God who is the author of the light of nature, as well as the light of revelation. He in mercy to mankind, makes known many things by natural light to work upon men's fear and selflove to restrain their corruptions.

4. When God restrains men's corruptions by his providence, this is restraining grace. And that whether it be his general providence, or his providence in ordering the state of mankind; or his particular providence, or providential disposals towards them in particular.

(1.) God doth greatly restrain the corruption of the world by ordering the state of mankind. He has set mankind here in a mortal state, and that is a great restraint on their corruption. He hath set mankind in a state of probation for eternity, and that is a great restraint to corruption. God hath so ordered the state of mankind, that ordinarily many kinds of sin and wickedness are disgraceful, and what tend to the hurt of a man's character and reputation amongst his fellow men; and that is a great restraint. He hath so disposed the world that many kinds of wickedness are many ways very contrary to men's temporal interest; and that is a great restraint. God has so disposed the state of mankind, that they are led to prohibit many kinds of wickedness by human laws; and that is a great restraint. God hath set up a church in the world, made of those, who, if they are answerable to their profession, have the fear and love of God in their hearts; and they, by holding forth light and the word of God, and keeping up the ordinances of God in the world, and by warning others, are a great restraint to the wickedness of the world.

But in all these things the restraining grace of God appears. It is God's mercy to mankind, that he has so ordered their state, that they should have so many things, by fear and a regard to their own interest, to restrain their corruptions. It is God's mercy to the world, that the state of mankind here does so differ in that respect from the state of the damned in hell; where men will have none of these things to restrain them: They will not be in such circumstances that will so influence their hope and fear to restrain them from sin.

The wisdom of God, as well as the attributes of God's grace, greatly appears in thus disposing things for the restraining the wickedness of men.

(2.) God doth greatly restrain the corruptions of men by his particular providence, or providence towards particular persons, by placing men in such circumstances as to lay them under restraints. And to this it is often owing that some natural men never go such lengths in sinning, or are never guilty of such atrocious wickedness as some others, that providence has placed in different circumstances. If it were not for this, many thousands of natural men, who now live sober and orderly lives, would do as Pharaoh did. The reason why they do not, is, that providence has placed them in different circumstances. If they were in the same circumstances as Pharaoh was in, they would do as he did. And so, if in the same circumstances as Manasseh, as Judas, as Nero. But providence restrains their corruptions, by putting them in such circumstances as not to open such a door or outlet for their corruptions as he did to them. So some do not do such horrid things as others; they do not live such horribly vicious lives as some others, because providence has restrained them, by ordering that they should have a better education than others. Providence has ordered that they should be the children of pious parents, it may be, or should live where they should enjoy many means of grace; and so providence has laid them under restraints. Now this is restraining grace. The attribute of God's grace is exercised in thus restraining persons in providence.

And oftentimes God restrains men's corruptions by particular events of providence. By particular afflictions they are brought under, or by particular occurrences, whereby God does, as it were, block up men's way in their course of sin, or in some wickedness that they had devised, and that otherwise they would perpetrate. Or something happens unexpected, to hold men back from that which they were about to commit. When men are restrained thus, it is God that restrains them. Thus God restrained David by his providence from shedding blood as he intended to do. "Now therefore, my Lord, as

the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the Lord hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand....." 1 Sam. xxv. 26. God withheld it from him no otherwise than by ordering it so in his providence, that Abigail should come, and by her wisdom should cool and pacify him, and persuade him to alter his purpose. See verses 32, 33, 34.

5. Godly persons are greatly indebted to restraining grace, in keeping them from dreadful acts of sin. So it was in that instance of David, that has been just mentioned. Godly persons, when God has left, and has not restrained them, have fallen into dreadful acts of sin. So did David in the case of Uriah, Lot, Peter. And when other Godly persons are kept from falling into such sins, or much worse sins than these, it is owing to the restraining grace of God. Merely having a principle of grace in their hearts, or merely their being godly persons, without God's presence to restrain them, will not keep them from great acts of sin. That the godly do not fall into the most horrid sins that can be conceived of, is owing, not so much to any inconsistence between their falling into such sins, and the having the principle of grace in the heart, as it is owing to the covenant mercy of God, whereby he has promised never to leave nor forsake his people; and that he will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able; but with the temptation will make a way for them to escape. If saving grace restrains men from great acts of sin, this is owing to God, who gives such exercises of grace at that time when the temptation comes, that they are restrained.

Let not the godly therefore be insensible of their iedebtedness to the restraining grace of God. Though the godly cannot be said to be enemies to God, because a principle of enmity does not reign; yet they have the very same principle and seed of enmity in them, though it be mortified. Though it be not in reigning power, yet it has great strength; and is too strong for them without God's almighty power to help them against it. Though they be not enemies to God, because they have another principle, besides a principle of enmity, viz. a principle of love, yet their old man, the body of sin

and death, that yet remains in them, is a mortal enemy to God. Corruption in the godly is not a whit better than it is in the wicked. The corruption in them is of as bad a nature every whit as that which is in a mortal enemy to God: It aims at the life of God wherever it is. And though it be not in reigning power, yet it would dreadfully rage were it not for God's restraining grace.

God gives his restraining grace to both natural men and godly men; but only there is this difference. God gives his restraining grace to his children in the way of covenant mercy; it is part of the mercy promised to them in his covenant. God is faithful and will not leave them to sin in like manner as wicked men do, otherwise they would do every whit as bad.

Let not therefore the godly attribute it to themselves, or merely to their own goodness, that they are not guilty of such horrid crimes as they hear of in others: Let them consider, it is not owing to them, but to God's restraints.

Thus all both godly and ungodly, may learn from this doctrine, their great indebtedness to the restraining grace of God.

I now proceed to

Inf. II. Hence we may learn the reason why natural men will not come to Christ: For they do not come because they will not come. *Ye will not come to me that ye might have life*, John v. 40. When we say that natural men are not willing to come to Christ, it is not meant that they are not willing to be delivered from hell; for without doubt, no natural man is willing to go to hell. Nor is it meant that they are not willing that Christ should keep them from going to hell. Without doubt, natural men that are under awakenings, do often greatly desire this. But if they do desire it, this does not argue that they are willing to come to Christ; for notwithstanding their desire to be delivered from hell, yet their hearts do not close with Christ, but are averse to him. They see nothing in Christ wherefore they should desire him; no beauty nor comeliness to draw or incline their hearts to him. And they are not willing to take Christ as he is; they would fain divide Christ. There are some things in him that they

like, and others that they greatly dislike; but consider him as he is, and as he is offered to them in the gospel, and they will not have him. They are not willing to accept of Christ as he is offered; for in doing so, they must of necessity part with all their sins; they must sell the world, and part with their own righteousness. But they are not willing to do that; they had rather, for the present, run the venture of going to hell than do that.

When men are truly willing to come to Christ, they are freely willing. It is not what they are forced and driven to by threatenings; but they are willing to come, and choose to come without being driven. But natural men have no such free willingness; but, on the contrary, have an aversion. And the ground of it is that which we have heard, viz. That they are enemies to God. Their having such a reigning enmity against God, makes them obstinately refuse to come to Christ. If a man is an enemy to God, he will necessarily be an enemy to Christ too; for Christ is the son of God; he is infinitely near to God, yea he is God. He has the nature of God, as well as the nature of man. He is a Saviour appointed of God. God anointed him, and sent him into the world. And in doing what he did in the work of redemption, he wrought the works of God. He always did those things that pleased God; and all that he does as a Saviour, is to the glory of God. And one great thing that he aimed at in his redemption, was to deliver them from their idols which they had chosen, and bring them to God. The case being so, and sinners being enemies to God, they will necessarily be opposite to coming to Christ; for Christ is of God, and as a Saviour, seeks to bring them to God only: But natural men are not of God, but are averse to him.

Inf. III. From this doctrine we may learn, how dreadful the condition of natural men is. Their state is a state of enmity with God. If we consider what God is, and what men are, it will be easy for us to conclude, that such men as are God's enemies, must be miserable. Consider, ye that are enemies to God, how great a God he is that ye are enemies to. He is the eternal God: The God that fills heaven and earth,

and whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain. He is the God that made you; the God in whose hand your breath is, and whose are all your ways; the God in whom you live, and move, and have your being; the God who has your soul and body in his hands every moment.

You would look on yourself as in very unhappy circumstances, if your neighbors were all your enemies, and none of your fellow creatures were your friends. If every body were set against you, and all despised and hated you, you would be ready to think, you had better be out of the world than in it. But if it be such a calamity to have enmity maintained between you and your fellow creatures, what is it when you and the Almighty God are enemies one to another? What avails either the friendship or enmity of your neighbor, poor little worms of the dust, that are about you, in comparison of the friendship or enmity of the great God of heaven and earth?

Consider,

(1.) If you continue in your enmity a little longer there will be a mutual enmity between God and you to all eternity. God will appear to be your dreadful and irreconcilable enemy. And you know not how soon it will come to this. If you should die an enemy to God, there will be no such thing as any reconciliation after death. God will then appear in hatred of you. As you are a mere enemy to God, so God will then appear a mere enemy to you; he will appear in perfect hatred without any love, and without any pity, and without any mercy at all. As you hate God, he will hate you. And that will be verified of you: *My soul loathed them, and their soul abhorred me*, Zech. xi. 8. And then God will be your enemy forever. If you be not reconciled so as to become his friend in this life, God never will become your friend after death. If you continue an enemy to God till death, God will continue an enemy to you to all eternity. There will nothing avail to reconcile God to you hereafter. You will find that you cannot move the heart of God by any of your cries. You will have no mediator offered you; there will be no day's man betwixt you. So that it becomes you to

consider what it will be to have God your enemy to all eternity, without any possibility of being reconciled.

Consider, what will it be to have this enmity to be mutual or maintained forever on both sides? For as God will forever continue an enemy to you, so you will forever continue an enemy to God. If you continue God's enemy until death, you will always be his enemy. And after death your enmity will have no restraint, but it will break out and rage without control. When you come to be a firebrand of hell, you will be a firebrand in two respects, viz. As you will be all on fire, full of the fire of God's wrath: And also as you will be all on a blaze with spite and malice towards God. You will be as full of the fire of malice, as you will with the fire of divine vengeance; and both will make you full of torment. Then you will appear as you are, a viper indeed. You are now a viper, but under great disguise; a wolf in sheep's clothing; but then your mask will be pulled off; you shall lose your garments, and walk naked, Rev. xvi. 15. Then will you as a serpent, spit poison at God, and vent your rage and malice in fearful blasphemies. Out of that mouth, out of which, when you open it, will proceed flames, will also proceed dreadful blasphemies against God. That same tongue, to cool which you will wish for a drop of water, will be eternally employed in cursing and blaspheming God and Christ. And that not from any new corruption being put into your heart, but only from God's withdrawing his hand from restraining your old corruption. And what a miserable way will this be of spending your eternity!

(2.) Consider what will be the consequence of a mutual enmity between God and you, if it be continued. Now you find yourself left alone; you find no very terrible event, but there will be great changes. Though hitherto you have met with no very great changes, yet they will come. After a little while, dying time will come; and then what will be the consequences of this enmity? God, whose enemy you are, has the frame of your body in his hands. Your times are in his hand; and he it is that appoints your bounds. And when he sends death to arrest you, and change your countenance, and

dissolve your frame, and take you away from all your earthly friends, and from all that is dear and pleasant to you in the world; what will be the issue then of God and you being enemies one to another? Will not you then stand in need of God's help? Would not he be the best friend in such a case, worth more than ten thousand earthly friends? If God be your enemy, then whom will you betake yourself to for a friend? When you launch forth into the boundless gulph of eternity, then you will need some friend to take care of you; but if God be your enemy, where will you betake yourself? Your soul must go naked into another world, in eternal separation from all worldly things; and you will not be able to dispose of yourself; your soul will not be in its own power to defend or dispose of itself. Will you not then need to have God for a friend, into whose hands you may commend your spirit? And how dreadful will it be to have God for your enemy then?

The time is coming when the frame of this world shall be dissolved. Christ shall descend in the clouds of heaven, in the glory of his Father; and you, with all the rest of mankind, must stand before the judgment seat of God. Then what will be the consequence of this mutual enmity between God and you! If God be your enemy, who will stand your friend? Who else will be able to help you, and what will you do? And what will be the event of God's being your enemy then? Now, it may be, it does not appear to be very terrible to you to have God for your enemy; but when such changes as these are brought to pass, it will greatly alter the appearance of things. Then God's favor will appear to you of infinite worth. They, and they only will then appear happy, who have the love of God; and then you will know that God's enemies are miserable.

But under this head, consider more particularly several things.

(1.) What God can do to his enemies. Or rather, what can he not do? How miserable can he, who is almighty, make his enemies, and those that he is an enemy to? Consider, you that are enemies to God, whether or no you shall be able to

make your part good with him. "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?" 1 Cor. x. 22. Have you such a conceit of your own strength as that you think to try it out with God? Do you intend to run the risk of an encounter with him? Do you imagine that your hands can be strong, or your heart endure? Do you think you shall be well able to defend yourself? Or will you be able to escape out of his hand? Or do you think to harden your own heart and fortify yourself with courage, and set yourself to bear? And do you think that you shall be able to uphold your spirits when God acts as an enemy towards you? If so, then gird up your loins and prepare to meet God and see what the event will be. Therefore thus will I do unto thee...." And because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God ..." Amos iv. 12. Is it not in vain to set the briars and thorns in battle against God? Is it not like setting dry briars and thorns in battle array against devouring flames; which, though they seem to be armed with natural weapons, yet the fire will pass through them, and burn them together? See Isa. xxvii. 4.

And if you endeavor to support yourself under God's wrath, cannot God lay so much upon you as to sink and crush you? Cannot he lay you under such misery as to cause your spirit quite to fail; so that you shall find no strength to resist him, or to uphold yourself? Why should a little worm think of supporting himself against an omnipotent adversary? Has not he that made you, and gave you your strength, and your courage, got your strength and courage in his hands? Is it an hard thing for him to overcome it? Consider God has made your soul; and he that made it knows how to punish it to what degree he will. He can fill it with misery; he can bring what degree of sorrow, and anguish, and horror he will. And he that made your body can bring what torments he will upon it. He has made every vein and sinew; and has every one in his hands, and he can fill every one as full of torments as he will. God, who made you, has given you a capacity to bear torment; and he has that capacity in his hands; and he can enlarge it, and make you capable of more misery, as much more as he will. If God hates any one, and sets himself

against him as his enemy, what cannot he do with him? How dreadful must it be to fall into the hands of such an enemy! Surely, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Heb, x. 31.

2. If God be your mere enemy, you may rationally conclude that he will act as such in his dealings with you. We have already observed that you are a mere enemy to God; that is, have enmity without any love or true respect. So, if you continue to be so, God will appear to be your mere enemy; and will be so forever without being reconciled. But if it be so, he will doubtless act as such. If he eternally hates you, he will act in his dealings with you as one that hates you with mere hatred, without any love or pity. The proper tendency and aim of hatred, is the misery of the object hated; misery, and nothing else. So that you may expect God will make you miserable, and that you will not be spared; for sparing is not the effect of hatred, but of pity and mercy, which is a quite different thing from enmity.

Now God does not act as your mere enemy; if he corrects you, it is in measure. He now exercises abundance of mercy to you. He threatens you now, but it is in a way of warning, and so in a merciful way. He now calls and invites, and strives with you, and waits to be gracious to you. But hereafter there will be an end of all these things: In another world God will cease to show you mercy.

3. If you will continue God's enemy, you may rationally conclude that God will deal with you so as to make it appear how dreadful it is to have God for an enemy. It is very dreadful to have a mighty prince for an enemy. *The wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion*, Prov. xix. 12. But if the wrath of a man, a fellow worm, be so terrible, what is the wrath of God! And God will doubtless show it to be immensely more dreadful. If you will be an enemy, God will make you know that it is not a light thing to be an enemy to him, and have him for an enemy to you. God will doubtless glorify himself as an enemy, in his dealings with those to whom he is an enemy. That is, he will act so as to glorify those attributes which he exercises as an enemy; which are his majesty, his

power and justice. God will deal so with you as to glorify these attributes in your destruction. His great majesty, his awful justice, and mighty power, shall be showed upon you. "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." Rom. ix. 22.

(4.) Consider what God has said he will do to his enemies. He has declared that they shall not escape, but that he will surely punish them. "Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies, thy right hand shall find out all those that hate thee," Psal. xxi. 8. "And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: He will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face," Deut. vii. 10. "The Lord shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses." Psal. lxviii. 21.

Yea, God hath sworn, that he will be avenged on them; and that in a most awful and dreadful manner. "For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live forever. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and I will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, (and my sword shall devour flesh) and that with the blood of the slain....from the beginning of revenges on the enemy." Deut. xxxii. 40, 41, 42. The terribleness of that destruction that God will bring on his enemies, is here variously set forth. As particularly in God's "whetting his glittering sword," as one that prepares himself to do some great execution. "His hands take hold on judgment," to signify that he will surely reward them as they deserve." "He will render vengeance to his enemies, and reward them that hate him." i. e. He will render their full reward; he will not fail or come short. As in the forementioned place it was said he would not be slack in this matter. "I will make mine arrows drunk with blood." This signifies the greatness of the destruction. It shall not be a little of their blood that shall satisfy; but his arrows shall be glutted with their blood. "And his sword shall devour flesh." That is, it shall make

dreadful waste of it. Hereby is very lively set forth the terrible manner in which God will one day rise up and execute vengeance on his enemies.

Again, the totality and perfection of their destruction is represented in the following words: "The wicked shall perish, the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs, they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away," Psal. xxxvii. 20. The fat of lambs, when it is burnt in the fire, burns all up; there is not so much as a cinder left; it all consumes into smoke. This is made use of here to represent the perfect destruction of God's enemies in his wrath. So God hath promised Christ, that he would make his enemies his footstool, Psal. cx. 1. i. e. He would pour the greatest contempt upon them, and as it were tread them under foot.

Consider that all these things will be executed on you if you continue God's enemies.

Inf. IV. If it be so, that natural men are God's enemies, hence we may learn how justly God may refuse to show you mercy. For is God obliged to show mercy to his enemies? Is God bound to set his love on them that have no love to him; but hate him with perfect hatred? Is God bound to come and dwell with them that have an aversion to him, and choose to keep at a distance from him, and fly from him as one that is hateful to them? If you earnestly desire the salvation of your soul, is God bound to comply with your desires, when you do always resist and oppose his will? Is God bound to be persuaded and overcome by your prayers, when you are obstinate in your opposition to him, and refuse to yield obedience to him? Is God bound to put honor upon you, and to advance you to such dignity as to be a child of the king of kings, and the heir of the kingdom of glory, while you at the same time have God in the greatest contempt, and set him too low to have the lowest place in your heart? Is God bound to spare your life, and deliver you from eternal death, when you are a mortal enemy to God, and would, if you could, destroy the being of God? Is God obliged to set his great and transcendent love on you, so as to give you benefits purchased by

the blood of his own Son, when your heart is all the while full of that enmity that strikes at the life of God?

This doctrine affords a strong argument for the absolute sovereignty of God, with respect to the salvation of sinners. If God is pleased to show mercy to his haters, it is certainly fit that he should do it in a sovereign way, without acting as any way obliged. God will show mercy to his mortal enemies; but then he will not be bound, he will have his liberty to choose the objects of his mercy; to show mercy to what enemy he pleases, and punish and destroy which of his haters he pleases. And certainly this is a fit and reasonable thing. It is fit that God should distribute saving blessings in this way, and in no other, viz. in a sovereign and arbitrary way. And that any body ever thought of, or devised any other way for God to show mercy, than to have mercy on whom he would have mercy, must arise from ignorance of their own hearts, whereby they were insensible what enemies they naturally are to God.

But consider here the following things,

1. How causelessly you are enemies to God. You have no manner of reason for it, either from what God is, or from what he has done. You have no reason for this from what he is, for he is an infinitely lovely and glorious being; the fountain of all excellency: All that is amiable and lovely in the universe, is originally and eminently in him. Nothing can possibly be conceived of, that could be lovely in God, that is not in him, and that in the greatest possible degree, even infinitely.

And you have no reason for this, from what God has done. For he has been a good and bountiful God to you. He has exercised abundance of kindness to you; has carried you from the womb, preserved your life, taken care of you, and provided for you all your life long. He has exercised great patience and longsuffering towards you. If it had not been for the kindness of God to you, what would have become of you? What would have become of your body? And what, before this time, would have become of your soul? And you are now, every day, and hour, maintained by the goodness and bounty of God.

Every new breath you draw, is a new gift of God to you. How causelessly then are you such dreadful enemies to God? And how justly might God, for it, eternally deprive you of all mercy, seeing you do thus requite God for his mercy and kindness to you?

2. Consider how you would resent it, if others were such enemies to you as you are to God. If they had their hearts so full of enmity to you; if they treated you with such contempt, and opposed you, as you do God; and injured you so much as you do God, how would you resent it? Do you not find that you are apt greatly to resent it, when any oppose you, and show an ill spirit towards you? And though you excuse your own enmity against God from your corrupt nature that you brought into the world with you, which you could not help, yet you do not excuse others for being enemies to you from their corrupt nature that they brought into the world, which they could not help; but are ready bitterly to resent it notwithstanding.

Consider therefore, if you, a poor, unworthy, unlovely creature, do so resent it, when you be not loved, but hated, how may God justly resent it when you are enemies to him, an infinitely glorious being; and a being from whom you have received so much kindness?

3. How unreasonable it is for you to imagine that you can oblige God to have respect to you by any thing that you can do, continuing still to be his enemy! If you think you have prayed and read, and done considerable for God; yet who cares for the seeming kindness of an enemy?

What value would you yourself set upon it, if a man should seem to cary it respectfully to you, with a fair face, talking smooth, and making a show of friendship; when you knew, at the same time, that he was inwardly your mortal enemy? Would you look upon yourself obliged for such respect and kindness? Would you not rather abhor it? Would you count such respect to be valued, as Joab's towards Amasa, who took him by the beard, and kissed him, and said, art thou in health, my brother? And smote him at the same time under the fifth rib, and killed him?

What if you do pray to God, is God obliged to hear the prayers of an enemy? What if you have taken a great deal of pains, is God obliged to give heaven for the prayers of an enemy? God may justly abhor your prayers, and all that you do in religion, as the flattery of a mortal enemy. No wonder God does not accept any thing from the hands of an enemy.

Inf. V. Hence we may learn how wonderful is the love that is manifested in giving Christ to die for us. For this love is love to enemies. That is taken notice of in the text, "While we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." How wonderful was the love of God the Father in giving such a gift to such, who not only were such as could not be profitable to him, and such as could merit nothing from him, and poor little worms of the dust; but were his enemies, and enemies to so great a degree! They had that enmity that aimed at his life; yet so did he love them, that he gave his own Son to lay down his own life to save their lives. Though they had that enmity that sought to pull God down out of his throne, yet God so loved them, that he sent down Christ from heaven, from his throne there, to be in the form of a servant; and instead of a throne of glory, gave him to be nailed to the cross, and to be laid in the grave, that so we might be brought to a throne of glory.

How wonderful was the love of Christ in thus exercising dying love to his enemies! That he should so love those that hated him, with hatred that sought to take away his life, so as voluntarily to lay down his life, that they might have life through him. "Herein is love; not that we loved him, but that he loved us, and laid down his life for us."

Inf. VI. If we are all naturally God's enemies, hence we may learn what a spirit it becomes us to be of towards our enemies. Though we are enemies to God, yet we hope that God has loved us; and we hope that Christ has died for us; and we hope that God has forgiven or will forgive us, and will do us good, and bestow infinite mercies and blessings upon us, so as to make us happy forever. All this mercy, we hope has been, or will be exercised towards us while enemies.

Certainly then, it will not become us to be bitter in our spirits against those that are enemies to us, and have injured and ill treated us, and though they have yet an ill spirit towards us. Seeing we depend so much on God's forgiving us, though enemies, we should be of a spirit of forgiveness towards our enemies. And therefore our Saviour inserted it in that prayer which he dictated as a general directory to all; "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," to enforce the duty upon us, and to show us how reasonable it is. And we ought to love them even while enemies; for so we hope God hath done to us. We should be the children of our Father, who is kind to the unthankful and evil. Luke vi. 35.

If we refuse thus to do, and are of another spirit, we may justly expect that God will deny us his mercy, as he has threatened! "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Matth. vi 14, 15. The same we have in the parable of the man who owed his lord ten thousand talents. Matth. xviii. 23....35.

SERMON IV.

The true Christian's Life, a Journey towards Heaven.

HEBREWS XI. 13, 14.

AND CONFESSED THAT THEY WERE STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON THE EARTH. FOR THEY THAT SAY SUCH THINGS, DECLARE PLAINLY THAT THEY SEEK A COUNTRY.

THE apostle is here setting forth the excellencies of the grace of faith, by the glorious effects and happy issue of it in the saints of the Old Testament. He had spoken in the preceding part of the chapter particularly of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Jacob. Having enumerated those instances, he takes notice that "these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers," &c.

In these words the apostle seems to have a more particular respect to Abraham and Sarah, and their kindred that came with them from Haran, and from Ur of the Chaldees, by the 15th verse, where the apostle says, "and truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned." It was they that upon God's call left their own country.

Two things may be observed in the text.

1. What these saints confessed of themselves. viz. "that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

Thus we have a particular account concerning Abraham. "I am a stranger and sojourner with you." Gen. xxiii. 4.

And it seems to have been the general sense of the patriarchs, by what Jacob says to Pharaoh. "And Jacob said to Pharaoh, the days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." Gen. xlvii. 9. "I am a stranger and a sojourner with thee, as all my fathers were." Psal. xxxix. 2.

2. The inference that the apostle draws from hence, viz. that they sought another country as their home. "For they that say such things, declare plainly, that they seek a country." In confessing that they were strangers, they plainly declared, that this is not their country; that this is not the country where they are at home. And in confessing themselves to be pilgrims, they declared plainly, that this is not their settled abode; but that they have respect to some other country, that they seek and are travelling to as their home.

DOCTRINE.

This life ought so to be spent by us, as to be only a journey towards Heaven.

Here I would observe,

I. *That we ought not to rest in the world and its enjoyments, but should desire heaven.*

This our hearts should be chiefly upon and engaged about. We should *seek first the kingdom of God*, Matth. vi. 33. He that is on a journey, seeks the place that he is journeying to. We ought above all things to desire a heavenly happiness: to go to heaven, and there be with God, and dwell with Jesus Christ. If we are surrounded with many outward enjoyments, and things that are very comfortable to us; if we are settled in families, and have those good friends and relations that are very desirable; if we have companions whose society is delightful to us; if we have children that are pleasant and hopeful, and in whom we see many promising qualifications; if we live by good neighbors; have much of the respect of others; have a good name; are generally beloved where we are known;

and have comfortable and pleasant accommodations; yet we ought not to take our rest in these things. We should not be willing to have these things for our portion, but should seek a higher happiness in another world. We should not merely seek something else in addition to these things, but should be so far from resting in them, that we should choose and desire to leave these things for heaven; to go to God and Christ there. We should not be willing to live here always, if we could, in the same strength and vigor of body and mind as when in youth, or in the midst of our days; and always enjoy the same pleasure, and dear friends, and other earthly comforts. We should choose and desire to leave them all in God's due time, that we might go to heaven, and there have the enjoyment of God.—We ought to possess them, enjoy and make use of them, with no other view or aim, but readily to quit them whenever we are called to it, and to change them for heaven. And when we are called away from them, we should go cheerfully and willingly.

He that is going a journey, is not wont to rest in what he meets with that is comfortable and pleasing on the road. If he passes along through pleasant places, flowery meadows, or shady groves; he does not take up his content in these things. He is content only to take a transient view of these pleasant objects as he goes along. He is not enticed by these fine appearances to put an end to his journey, and leave off the thought of proceeding: No; but his journey's end is in his mind; that is the great thing that he aims at. So if he meets with comfortable and pleasant accommodations on the road at an inn, yet he does not rest there; he entertains no thoughts of settling there. He considers that these things are not his own, and that he is but a stranger; that that is not allotted for his home. And when he has refreshed himself, or tarried but for a night, he is for leaving these accommodations, and going forward, and getting onward towards his journey's end. And the thoughts of coming to his journey's end, are not at all grievous to him. He does not desire to be travelling always and never come to his journey's end; the thoughts of that would be discouraging to him. But it is pleasant to him to think, that so much of the

way is gone, that he is now nearer home; and that he shall presently be there; and the toil and fatigue of his journey will be over.

So should we thus desire heaven so much more than the comforts and enjoyments of this life, that we should long to change these things for heaven. We should wait with earnest desire for the time when we shall arrive at our journey's end. The apostle mentions it as an encouraging, comfortable consideration to Christians, when they draw nigh their happiness.—"Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

Our hearts ought to be loose to these things, as it is with a man that is on a journey. However comfortable enjoyments are, yet we ought to keep our hearts so loose from them, as cheerfully to part with them, whenever God calls. "But this I say, brethren, the time is short. It remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away." 1 Cor. 29, 30, 31.

We ought to look upon these things as only lent to us for a little while, to serve a present turn; but we should set our hearts on heaven as our inheritance forever.

II. *We ought to seek heaven, by travelling in the way that leads thither.*

The way that leads to heaven is the way of holiness. We should choose and desire to travel thither in this way and in no other. We should part with all those sins, those carnal appetites that are as weights, that will tend to hinder us in our travelling towards heaven. "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race set before us, Heb. xii. 1. However pleasant any practice, or the gratification of any appetite may be, we must lay it aside, cast it away; if it be any hinderance, and stumblingblock in the way to heaven.

We should travel on in a way of obedience to all God's commands, even the difficult as well as the easy commands. We should travel on in a way of selfdenial; denying all our

sinful inclinations and interests. The way to heaven is ascending; we must be content to travel up hill, though it be hard and tiresome, though it be contrary to the natural tendency and bias of our flesh that tends downward to the earth. We should follow Christ in the path that he has gone in. The way that he travelled in was the right way to heaven. We should take up our cross and follow him. We should travel along in the same way of meekness and lowliness of heart; in the same way of obedience and charity, and diligence to do good; and patience under afflictions. The way to heaven is a heavenly life; we must be travelling towards heaven in a way of imitation of those that are in heaven. In imitation of the saints and angels there, in their holy employment, in their way of spending their time, in loving, adoring, serving, and praising God and the Lamb. This is the path that we ought to prefer before all others, if we could have any other that we might choose. If we could go to heaven in a way of carnal living, in the way of the enjoyment and gratification of our lusts, we should rather prefer a way of holiness and conformity to the spiritual self-denying rules of the gospel.

III. *We should travel on in this way in a laborious manner.*

The going of long journies is attended with toil and fatigue; especially if the journey be through a wilderness. Persons, in such a case, expect no other than to suffer hardships and weariness in travelling over mountains and through bad places.

So we should travel in this way of holiness, in a laborious manner, improving our time and strength to surmount the difficulties and obstacles that are in the way. The land that we have to travel through is a wilderness; there are many mountains, rocks, and rough places that we must go over in the way; and there is a necessity that we should lay out our strength.

IV. *Our whole lives ought to be spent in travelling this road.*

1. We ought to begin early. This should be the first concern and business that persons engage in when they come to be capable of acting in the world in doing any business.

When they first set out in the world, they should set out on this journey. And

2. We ought to travel on in this way with assiduity. It ought to be the work of every day to travel on towards heaven. We should often be thinking of our journey's end; and not only be thinking of it, but it should be our daily work to travel on in the way that leads to it.

As he that is on a journey is often thinking on the place that he is going to, and it is his care and business every day to get along; to improve his time, to get towards his journey's end. He spends the day in it; it is the work of the day, whilst the sun serves him. And when he has rested in the night, he gets up in the morning, and sets out again on his journey; and so from day to day, till he has got to his journey's end. Thus should heaven be continually in our thought; and the immediate entrance or passage to it, viz. death, should be present with us. And it should be a thing that we familiarize to ourselves; and so it should be our work every day, to be preparing for death, and travelling heavenward.

3. We ought to persevere in this way as long as we live: We should hold out in it to the end.

"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us," Heb. xii. 1. Though the road be difficult, and it be a toilsome thing to travel it, we must hold out with patience, and be content to endure the hardships of it. If the journey be long, yet we must not stop short; we should not give out in discouragement, but hold on till we are arrived at the place we seek. We ought not to be discouraged with the length and difficulties of the way, as the children of Israel were, and be for turning back again. All our thought and design should be to get along. We should be engaged and resolved to press forward till we arrive.

V. *We ought to be continually growing in holiness; and in that respect coming nearer and nearer to heaven.*

He that is travelling towards a place, comes nearer and nearer to it continually. So we should be endeavoring to come nearer to heaven, in being more heavenly; becoming

more and more like the inhabitants of heaven, and more and more as we shall be when we have arrived there, if ever that be.

We should endeavor continually to be more and more, as we hope to be in heaven, in respect of holiness and conformity to God. And with respect to light and knowledge, we should labor to be growing continually in the knowledge of God and Christ, and clear views of the glory of God, the beauty of Christ, and the excellency of divine things, as we come nearer and nearer to the beatific vision.

We should labor to be continually growing in divine love; that this may be an increasing flame in our hearts, till our hearts ascend wholly in this flame. We should be growing in obedience, and in heavenly conversation; that we may do the will of God on earth as the angels do in heaven.

We ought to be continually growing in comfort and spiritual joy; in sensible communion with God and Jesus Christ. Our path should be as "the shining light, that shines more and more to the perfect day." Prov. iv. 18.

We ought to be hungering and thirsting after righteousness; after an increase in righteousness. "As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." 1 Pet. ii. 2. And we should make the perfection of heaven our mark. We should rest in nothing short of this, but be pressing towards this mark, and laboring continually to be coming nearer and nearer to it. "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Phil. iii. 13, 14.

VI. *All other concerns of life ought to be entirely subordinate to this.*

As when a man is on a journey, all the steps that he takes are in order to further him on his journey; and subordinate to that aim of getting to his journey's end. And if he carries money or provision with him, it is to supply him in his journey. So we ought wholly to subordinate all our other business, and all our temporal enjoyments to this affair of travel-

ling to heaven. Journeying towards heaven, ought to be our only work and business, so that all we have and do, should be in order to that. When we have worldly enjoyments we should be ready to part with them, whenever they are in the way of our going toward heaven. We should sell all this world for heaven. When once any thing we have becomes a clog and hinderance to us, in the way heavenward, we should quit it immediately. When we use our worldly enjoyments and possessions, it should be with such a view and in such a manner as to further us in our way heavenward. Thus we should eat, and drink, and clothe ourselves. And thus should we improve the conversation and enjoyment of friends.

And whatever business we are setting about; whatever design we are engaged in, we should inquire with ourselves, whether this business or undertaking will forward us in our way to heaven? And if not, we should quit our design.

We ought to make use of worldly enjoyments, and pursue worldly business in such a degree and manner as shall have the best tendency to forward our journey heavenward, and no otherwise.

I shall offer some reasons of the doctrine.

I. *This world is not our abiding place.*

Our continuance in this world is but very short. Man's days on the earth are as a shadow. It was never designed by God this world should be our home. We were not born into this world for that end. Neither did God give us these temporal things, that we are accommodated with for that end. If God has given us good estates; if we are settled in families, and God has given us children, or other friends that are very pleasant to us; it is with no such view or design, that we should be furnished and provided for here, as for a settled abode; but with a design that we should use them for the present, and then leave them again in a very little time.

If we are called to any secular business; or if we are charged with the care of a family; with the instruction and education of children, we are called to these things with a design that we shall be called from them again, and not to be our everlasting employment. So that if we improve our lives to

any other purpose, than as a journey towards heaven, all our labor will be lost. If we spend our lives in the pursuit of a temporal happiness; if we set our hearts on riches, and seek happiness in them; if we seek to be happy in sensual pleasures; if we spend our lives in seeking the credit and esteem of men; the goodwill and respect of others; if we set our hearts on our children, and look to be happy in the enjoyment of them, in seeing them well brought up, and well settled, &c. All these things will be of little significancy to us. Death will blow up all our hopes and expectations, and will put an end to our enjoyment of these things. *The places that have known us will know us no more:* And the eye that has seen us shall see us no more. We must be taken away forever from all these things; and it is uncertain when; it may be soon after we have received them, and are put into the possession of them. It may be in the midst of our days, and from the midst of our enjoyments. And then where will be all our worldly employments and enjoyments, when we are laid in the silent grave! "So man lieth down and riseth not again, till the heavens be no more." Job xiv. 12.

II. *The future world was designed to be our settled and everlasting abode.*

Here it was intended that we should be fixed; and here alone is a lasting habitation, and a lasting inheritance and enjoyment to be had. We are designed for this future world. We are to be in two states; the one in this world, which is an imperfect state; the other, in the world to come. The present state is short and transitory; but our state in the other world is everlasting. When we go into another world, there we must be to all eternity. And as we are there at first, so we must be without change.

Our state in the future world, therefore, being eternal, is of so exceedingly greater importance than our state in this world, that it is worthy that our state here, and all our concerns in this world should be wholly subordinate to it.

III. *Heaven is that place alone where our highest end and highest good is to be obtained.*

God hath made us for himself. *Of God, and through God, and to God are all things.* Therefore then do we attain to our highest end when we are brought to God: But that is by being brought to heaven; for that is God's throne; that is the place of his special presence, and of his residence. There is but a very imperfect union with God to be had in this world; a very imperfect knowledge of God in the midst of abundance of darkness; a very imperfect conformity to God, mingled with abundance of enmity and estrangement. Here we can serve and glorify God, but in an exceeding imperfect manner; our service being mingled with much sin and dishonor to God.

But when we get to heaven, (if ever that be) there we shall be brought to a perfect union with God. There we shall have clear views of God. We shall see face to face, and know as we are known. There we shall be fully conformed to God, without any remainder of sin. We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. There we shall serve God perfectly. We shall glorify him in an exalted manner, and to the utmost of the powers and capacity of our nature. Then we shall perfectly give up ourselves to God. Then will our hearts be pure and holy offerings to God; offered all in a flame of divine love.

In heaven alone is the attainment of our highest good. God is the highest good of the reasonable creature. The enjoyment of him is our proper happiness; and is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied.

To go to heaven, fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here. Better than fathers and mothers, husbands, wives or children, or the company of any, or all earthly friends. These are but shadows; but the enjoyment of God is the substance. These are but scattered beams; but God is the sun. These are but streams; but God is the fountain. These are but drops; but God is the ocean.

Therefore it becomes us to spend this life only as a journey towards heaven, as it becomes us to make the seeking our highest end and proper good, the whole work of our lives;

and we should subordinate all other concerns of life to it. Why should we labor for any thing else; or set our hearts on any thing else but that which is our proper end and true happiness?

IV. *Our present state, and all that belongs to it, are designed by him that made all things, to be wholly in order to another world.*

This world was made for a place of preparation for another world. Man's mortal life was given him only here, that he might be prepared for his fixed state. And all that God has here given us, is given to this purpose. The sun shines upon us; the rain falls upon us; the earth yields her increase to us; civil and ecclesiastical affairs, family affairs, and all our personal concerns are designed and ordered in a subordination to a future world, by the maker and disposer of all things. They ought, therefore, to be subordinated to this by us.

APPLICATION.

I. *In a use of instruction.*

1. *This doctrine may teach us moderation in our mourning for the loss of dear friends, who, while they lived, improved their lives to right purposes.*

If they lived a holy life, then their lives were a journey towards heaven. And why should we be immoderate in mourning when they are got to their journey's end? Death to them, though it appears to us with a frightful aspect, is a great blessing. Their end is happy, and better than their beginning. "The day of their death is better to them than the day of their birth." Eccl. vii. 1. While they lived they desired heaven, and chose it above this world, or any of the enjoyments of it. They earnestly sought and longed for heaven; and why should we grieve that they have obtained it.

Now they have got to heaven, they have got home. They never were at home before. They have got to their Father's house. They find more comfort a thousand times, now they are got home, than they did in their journey. While they

were on their journey, they underwent much labor and toil. It was a wilderness that they passed through ; a difficult road. There were abundance of difficulties in the way ; mountains and rough places. It was a laborious, fatiguing thing to travel the road. They were forced to lay out themselves to get along ; and had many wearisome days and nights : But now they have got through ; they have got to the place they sought ; they are got home ; got to their everlasting rest. They need to travel no more ; nor labor any more ; nor endure any more toil and difficulty ; but enjoy perfect rest and peace ; and will enjoy them forever. " And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors ; and their works do follow them." Rev. xiv. 13. They do not mourn that they are got home, but greatly rejoice. They look back upon the difficulties, and sorrows, and dangers of life, rejoicing that they have got through them all.

We are ready to look upon death as though it were a calamity to them ; we are ready to mourn over them with tears of pity ; to think that those that were so dear to us, should be in the dark, rotting grave ; that they should there turn to corruption and worms ; that they should be taken away from their dear children, and other pleasant enjoyments ; and that they never should have any part more in any thing under the sun. Our bowels are ready to yearn over them, and we are ready to look upon it, as though some sorrowful thing had befallen them ; and as though they were in awful circumstances. But this is owing to our infirmity that we are ready thus to look upon it. They are in a happy condition. They are inconceivably blessed. They do not mourn, but rejoice with exceeding joy. Their mouths are filled with joyful songs ; they drink at rivers of pleasure. They find no mixture of grief at all, that they have changed their earthly houses and enjoyments, and their earthly friends, and the company of mortal mankind, for heaven. They think of it without any degree of regret.

This is an evil world in comparison to that they are now in. Their life here if attended with the best circumstances that any earthly life ever was, was attended with abundance that was adverse and afflictive; but now there is an end to all adversity. "They shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Rev. vii. 16, 17.

It is true we shall see them no more while here in this world, yet we ought not immoderately to mourn for that; though it used to be pleasant to us to see them; and though their company was sweet; for we should consider ourselves as but on a journey too; we should be travelling towards the same place that they are gone to; and why should we break our hearts with that, that they have got there before us; when we are following after them as fast as we can; and hope, as soon as ever we get to our journey's end, to be with them again; to be with them in better circumstances, than ever we were with them while here? A degree of mourning for near relations when departed, is not inconsistent with Christianity, but very agreeable to it: For, as long as we are flesh and blood, no other can be expected, than that we shall have animal propensities and affections. But we have not just reason to be overborne and sunk in spirit, when the death of near friends is attended with these circumstances; we should be glad they are got to heaven, our mourning should be mingled with joy. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others that have no hope." Thes. iv. 13. i. e. That they should not sorrow as the heathen, that had no knowledge of a future happiness, nor any certain hope of any thing for themselves or their friends, after they were dead. This appears by the following verse; "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him."

2. *If it be so, that our lives ought to be only a journey towards heaven; how ill do they improve their lives, that spend them in travelling towards hell?*

Some men spend their whole lives, from their infancy to their dying day, in going down the broad way to destruction. They do not only draw nearer to hell in length of time, but they every day grow more ripe for destruction; they are more assimilated to the inhabitants of the infernal world. While others press forward in the strait and narrow way to life, and laboriously travel up the hill towards Zion, against the inclinations and tendency of the flesh; these run with a swift career down towards the valley of eternal death; towards the lake of fire; towards the bottomless pit. This is the employment of every day, with all wicked men; the whole day is spent in it. As soon as ever they awake in the morning, they set out anew towards hell, and spend every waking moment in it. They begin in early days before they begin to speak. "The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies." Psalm xlviii. 4. They hold on in it with perseverance. Many of them that live to be old, are never weary in it; if they live to be an hundred years old, they will not give over travelling in the way to hell till they arrive there. And all the concerns of life are subordinated to this employment. A wicked man is a servant of sin; his powers and faculties are all employed in the service of sin, and in fitting for hell. And all his possessions are so used by him, as to be subservient to the same purpose. Some men spend their time in treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath. Thus do all unclean persons, that live in lascivious practices in secret. Thus do all malicious persons. Thus do all profane persons, that neglect duties of religion. Thus do all unjust persons; and those that are fraudulent and oppressive in their dealings. Thus do all backbiters and revilers. Thus do all covetous persons, that set their hearts chiefly on the riches of this world. Thus do tavernhaunters, and frequenters of evil company; and many other kinds of persons that might be mentioned. Thus do far the greater part of men; the bulk of mankind are hasting onward in the broad way to destruction. The way, as broad as it is, is, as it were, filled up with the multitude that are going with one accord this way. And they are every day going into hell out of this broad way by thousands

Multitudes are continually flowing down into the great lake of fire and brimstone, out of this broad way, as some mighty river constantly disembogues its water into the ocean.

3. *Hence when persons are converted, they do but begin their work, and set out in the way they have to go.*

They never till then do any thing at that work which their whole lives ought to be spent in; which we have now shown to be travelling towards heaven. Persons, before conversion, never take a step that way. Then does a man first set out on his journey, when he is brought home to Christ; and he is but just set out in it. So far is he from having done his work, that he then only begins to set his face towards heaven. His journey is not finished; he is then only first brought to be willing to go to it, and begins to look that way; so that his care and labor, in his Christian work and business, is then but begun, which he must spend the remaining part of his life in.

Those persons do ill, who, when they are converted, and have obtained a hope of their being in a good condition, do not strive as earnestly as they did before, while they were under awakenings. They ought, henceforward, as long as they live, to be as earnest and laborious as ever; as watchful and careful as ever; yea, they should increase more and more. It is no just objection or excuse from this, that now they have not the same to strive for as before; before they strove that they might be converted, but that they have obtained. Is there nothing else that persons have as much reason to strive, and lay out their strength for, as their own safety? Should we not be as willing to be diligent that we may serve and glorify God, as that we ourselves may be happy? And if we have obtained grace, yet there is not all obtained that may be. It is but a very little grace that we have obtained; we ought to strive that we may obtain more. We ought to strive as much that we may obtain the other degrees that are before, as we did to obtain that small degree that is behind. The apostle tells us, that he forgot what was behind, and reached forth towards what was before. Phil. iii. 13.

Yea, those that are converted, have now a further reason to strive for grace than they had before; for now they have

tasted, and seen something of the sweetness and excellency of it. A man that has once tasted the blessings of Canaan, has more reason to press forward towards it than he had before. And, then, they that are converted, should strive that they may make their calling and election sure. All those that are converted, are not sure of it; and those that are sure of it, do not know that they shall be always so; and still seeking and serving God with the utmost diligence, is the way to have assurance, and to have it maintained.

II. *Use may be of exhortation; so to spend the present life that it may only be a journey towards heaven.*

Labor to be sanctified, and to obtain such a disposition of mind, that you may be willing and desirous to change this world, and all the enjoyments of it for heaven. Labor to have your heart taken up so much about heaven and heavenly enjoyments, as that you may rejoice at any time when God calls you to leave your best earthly friends, and those things that are most comfortable to you here, to go to heaven, there to enjoy God and Christ.

Be persuaded to travel in the way that leads to heaven, viz. in a way of holiness and selfdenial, mortification, in a way of obedience to all the commands of God, in a way of following Christ's example, in a way of heavenly life, or imitation of the saints and angels that live in heaven. Be content to travel on in this way, in a laborious manner, to endure all the fatigues of it. Begin to travel it without delay, if you have not already begun it; and travel in it with assiduity. Let it be your daily work from morning to night, and hold out in it to the end; let there be nothing that shall stop or discourage you, or turn you aside from this road. Labor to be growing in holiness, to be coming nearer and nearer to heaven, in that you are more and more as you shall be when you get there, (if ever that be.) And let all other concerns be subordinated to this great concern of getting forward toward heaven. Consider the reasons that have been mentioned why you should thus spend your life. Consider that the world is not your abiding place, and was never so intended by God. Consider how little a while you are to be here, and how little

worth your while it is to spend your life to any other purpose. Consider that the future world is to be your everlasting abode; and that the enjoyments and concerns of this world, have their being only and entirely in order to another world. And consider further for motive.

1. *How worthy is heaven that your life should be wholly spent as a journey towards it.*

To what better purpose can you spend your life, whether you respect your duty or your interest? What better end can you propose to your journey than to obtain heaven? Here you are placed in this world, in this wilderness, and have your choice given you, that you may travel which way you please. And there is one way that leads to heaven. Now, can you direct your course better than this way? What can you choose better for your journey's end? All men have some aim or other in living. Some mainly seek worldly things; they spend their days in the pursuit of these things. But is not heaven, where is fulness of joy forever and ever, much more worthy to be sought by you? How can you better employ your strength, and use your means, and spend your days, than in travelling the road that leads to the everlasting enjoyment of God; to his glorious presence; to the city of the New Jerusalem; to the heavenly mount Zion: Where all your desires will be filled, and no danger of ever losing your happiness?

No man is at home in this world, whether he choose heaven or not; yet here he is but a transient person. Where can you choose your home better than in heaven? The rest and glory of heaven is so great, that it is worthy we should desire it above riches; above our father's houses, or our own; above husband or wife, or children, or all earthly friends. It is worthy that we should subordinate these things to it, and that we should be ready, cheerfully, to part with them for heaven, whenever God calls.

2. *This is the way to have death comfortable to us.*

If we spend our lives so as to be only a journeying towards heaven, this will be the way to have death, that is the end of the journey, and entrance into heaven, not terrible but comfortable.

This is the way to be free from bondage, through the fear of death, and to have the prospect and forethought of death comfortable. Does the traveller think of his journey's end with fear and terror, especially when he has been many days travelling, and it be a long and tiresome journey? Is it terrible to him to think that he has almost got to his journey's end? Are not men rather wont to rejoice at it? Were the children of Israel sorry, after forty years travel in the wilderness when they had almost got to Canaan? This is the way to have death not terrible when it comes. It is the way to be able to part with the world without grief. Does it grieve the traveller when he has got home, to quit his staff and load of provision that he had to sustain him by the way?

3. *No more of your life will be pleasant to think of when you come to die, than has been spent after this manner.*

All of your past life that has been spent as a journey towards heaven, will be comfortable to think of on a death bed, and no more. If you have spent none of your life this way, your whole life will be terrible to you to think of, unless you die under some great delusion. You will see then, how that all of your life that has been spent otherwise is lost. You will then see the vanity of other aims, that you may have proposed to yourself. The thought of what you here possessed and enjoyed in the world, will not be pleasant to you, unless you can think withal, that you have subordinated them to this purpose.

4. *Consider that those that are willing thus to spend their lives as a journey towards heaven, may have heaven.*

Heaven, as high as it is, and glorious as it is, is attainable for such poor worthless creatures as we are. We, even such worms, may attain to have for our home, that glorious region that is the habitation of the glorious angels; yea, the dwelling place of the glorious Son of God; and where is the glorious presence of the great Jehovah. And we may have it freely; there is no high price that is demanded of us for this privilege. We may have it without money and without price; if we are but willing to set out and go on towards it; are but willing to travel the road that leads to it, and bend our course that way

as long as we live ; we may and shall have heaven for our eternal resting place.

5. *Let it be considered, that if our lives be not a journey towards heaven, they will be a journey to hell.*

We cannot continue here always, but we must go somewhere else. All mankind after they have been in this world a little while, go out of it, and there are but two places that they go to ; the two great receptacles of all that depart out of this world ; the one is heaven ; whither a few, a small number in comparison, travel ; the way that leads hither, is but thinly occupied with travellers. And the other is hell, whither the bulk of mankind do throng. And one or the other of these must be our journey's end ; the issue of our course in this world.

I shall conclude by giving some directions :

1. Labor to get a sense of the vanity of this world, or the vanity of it on account of the little satisfaction that is to be enjoyed here ; and on account of its short continuance, and unserviceableness when we most stand in need of help, viz. on a death bed.

All men, that live any considerable time in the world, see abundance that might convince them of the vanity of the world, if they would but consider.

Be persuaded to exercise consideration, when you see and hear, from time to time, of the death of others. Labor to turn your thoughts this way. See if you can see the vanity of this world in such a glass. If you were sensible how vain a thing this world is, you would see that it is not worthy that your life should be spent to the purposes thereof ; and all is lost that is not some way aimed at heaven.

2. *Labor to be much acquainted with heaven.*

If you are not acquainted with it, you will not be likely to spend your life as a journey thither. You will not be sensible of the worth of it ; nor will you long for it. Unless you are much conversant in your mind with a better good, it will be exceeding difficult to you to have your hearts loose from these things, and to use them only in subordination to some-

thing else, and to be ready to part with them for the sake of that better good.

Labor therefore to obtain a realizing sense of a heavenly world, to get a firm belief of the reality of it, and to be very much conversant with it in your thoughts.

3. *Seek heaven only by Jesus Christ.*

Christ tells us that he is the way, and the truth and the life, John xiv. 6. He tells us that he is the door of the sheep. "I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved; and go in and out, and find pasture," John x. 9. If we therefore, would improve our lives as a journey towards heaven, we must seek it by him, and not by our own righteousness; as expecting to obtain only for his sake, looking to him, having our dependance on him only for the purchase of heaven, and procuring it for us by his merit. And expect strength to walk in a way of holiness, the way that leads to heaven, only from him.

4. *Let Christians help one another in going this journey.*

There are many ways that Christians might greatly help and forward one another in their way to heaven, by religious conference, and otherwise. And persons greatly need help in this way, which is, as I have observed, a difficult way.

Let Christians be exhorted to go this journey, as it were in company, conversing together while their journey shall end, and assisting one another. Company is very desirable in a journey, but in none so much as in this.

Let Christians go united, and not fall out by the way, which would be the way to hinder one another; but use all means they can to help one another up the hill.

This is the way to be more successful in travelling, and to have the more joyful meeting at their Father's house in glory.

SERMON V.

True Grace distinguished from the Experience of Devils.

JAMES ii. 19.

THOU BELIEVEST THAT THERE IS ONE GOD; THOU DOEST WELL; THE DEVILS ALSO BELIEVE AND TREMBLE.

OBSERVE in these words....1. Something that some depend on, as an evidence of their good estate, and acceptance, as the objects of God's favor, viz. a speculative faith, or belief of the doctrines of religion. The great doctrine of the existence of one only God is particularly mentioned; probably because this was a doctrine wherein especially there was a visible and noted distinction between professing Christians and the heathens, amongst whom the Christians, in those days, were dispersed: And therefore this was what many trusted in, as what recommended them to, or at least was an evidence of, their interest in the great spiritual and eternal privileges, in which real Christians were distinguished from the rest of the world.

2. How much is allowed concerning this faith viz. That it is a good attainment; "Thou doest well." It was good as it was necessary. This doctrine was one of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity; and, in some respects, above all others, fundamental. It was necessary to be believed, in order to salvation: And a being without the belief of this doctrine, especially in those that had such advantage to know, as they had, whom the apostle wrote to, would be a great sin, and what would vastly aggravate their damnation. This belief was also good, as it had a good tendency in many respects.

3. What is implicitly denied concerning it, viz. That it is any evidence of a person's being in a state of salvation. The whole context shews this to be the design of the apostle in the words: And it is particularly manifest by the conclusion of the verse; which is the

4. Thing observable in the words, viz. The argument by which the apostle proves, that this is no sign of a state of grace, viz. that it is found in the devils. They believe that there is one God, and that he is a holy, sinhating God; and that he is a God of truth, and will fulfil his threatenings, by which he has denounced future judgments, and a great increase of misery on them; and that he is an Almighty God, and able to execute his threatened vengeance upon them.

Therefore the DOCTRINE I infer from the words, to make the subject of my present discourse, is this:

Nothing in the mind of man, that is of the same nature with what the devils experience, or are the subjects of, is any sure sign of saving grace.

If there be any thing that the devils have, or find in themselves, which is an evidence of the saving grace of the Spirit of God, then the apostle's argument is not good; which is plainly this: That which is in the devils, or which they do, is no certain evidence of grace. But the devils believe that there is one God. Therefore, thy believing that there is one God, is no sure evidence that thou art gracious. So that the whole foundation of the apostle's argument, lies in that proposition; that which is in the devils, is no certain sign of grace.

Nevertheless, I shall mention two or three further reasons, or arguments, of the truth of this doctrine.

I. The devils have no degree of holiness; and therefore, those things which are nothing beyond what they are the subjects of, cannot be holy experiences.

The devil once was holy; but when he fell he lost all his holiness, and became perfectly wicked. He is the greatest sinner, and, in some sense, the father of all sin. John viii. 44. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth; because there was no truth in him: When

he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own ; for he is a liar, and the father of it." 1 John iii. 8. "He that committeth sin is of the devil ; for the devil sinneth from the beginning." He is spoken of, as by way of eminence, "THE WICKED ONE." So Matth. xiii. 19. "Then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart." verse 38. "The tares are the children of the wicked one." 1 John ii. 13. "I write unto you young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one." Chap. iii. 12. "Not as Cain who was of that wicked one." Chap. v. 18. "Whosoever is born of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." So the devils are called evil spirits, unclean spirits, powers of darkness, rulers of the darkness of the world, and wickedness itself. Eph. vi. 12. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood ; but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Therefore, surely, those things which the minds of devils are the subjects of, can have nothing of the nature of true holiness in them. The knowledge, and understanding which they have of the things of God and religion, cannot be of the nature of divine and holy light, nor any knowledge that is merely of the same kind. No such impressions as are made on their hearts can be of a spiritual nature. That kind of sense which they have of divine things, however great, cannot be a holy sense. Such affections as move their hearts, however powerful, cannot be holy affections. If there be no holiness in them, as they are in the devil, there can be no holiness in them as they are in man ; unless something be added to them beyond what is in them, or they are in the devil. And if any thing be added to them, then they are not the same things ; but are something beyond what devils are the subjects of ; which is contrary to the supposition ; for the proposition which I am upon, is, that those things which are of the same nature, and nothing beyond what devils are the subjects of, cannot be holy experiences. It is not the subject that makes the affection, or experience, or quality, holy ; but it is the quality that make, the subject holy.

And if those qualities and experiences which the devils are the subjects of, have nothing of the nature of holiness in them, then they can be no certain signs that persons who have them are holy or gracious. There is no certain sign of true grace, but those things which are spiritual and gracious. It is God's image, that is, his seal and mark, the stamp by which those that are his are known. But that which has nothing of the nature of holiness, has nothing of this image. That which is a sure sign of grace, must either be something which has the nature and essence of grace, or is flowing from, or some way belonging to its essence: For that which distinguishes things one from another, is their essence, or something appertaining to their essence; and therefore, that which is sometimes found wholly without the essence of holiness or grace, can be no essential, sure, or distinguishing mark of grace.

II. The devils are not only absolutely without all true holiness, but they are not so much as the subjects of any common grace.

If any should imagine that some things may be signs of grace which are not grace itself, or which have nothing of the nature and essence of grace and holiness in them; yet, certainly, they will allow that the qualifications, which are sure evidences of grace, must be things, that are near akin to grace, or having some remarkable affinity with it. But the devils are not only wholly destitute of any true holiness; but they are at the greatest distance from it, and have nothing in them in any wise a kin to it.

There are many in this world, who are wholly destitute of saving grace, who yet have common grace. They have no true holiness, but, nevertheless, have something of that which is called *moral virtue*; and are the subjects of some degree of the common influences of the Spirit of God. It is so with those in general, that live under the light of the gospel, and are not given up to judicial blindness, and hardness. Yea, those that are thus given up, yet have some degree of restraining grace while they live in this world; without which, the earth could not bear them, and they would in no measure, be tolerable members of human society. But when any are

damned, or cast into hell, as the devils are, God wholly withdraws his restraining grace, and all merciful influences of his Spirit whatsoever, and they have neither saving grace nor common grace; neither the grace of the Spirit, nor any of the common gifts of the Spirit; neither true holiness, nor moral virtue of any kind. Hence arises the vast increase of the exercise of wickedness in the hearts of men, when they are damned. And herein is the chief difference between the damned in hell, and unregenerate and graceless men in this world. Not that wicked men in this world have any more holiness or true virtue than the damned, or that wicked men, when they leave this world, have any principles of wickedness infused into them; but when men are cast into hell, God perfectly takes away his Spirit from them, as to all its merciful, common influences, and entirely withdraws from them all restraints of his Spirit and good providence.

III. It is unreasonable to suppose, that a person's being in any respect as the devil is, should be a certain sign that he is very unlike and opposite to him; and, hereafter, shall not have his part with him. True saints are extremely unlike and contrary to the devil, both relatively and really. They are so relatively. The devil is the grand rebel; the chief enemy of God and Christ; the object of God's greatest wrath; a condemned malefactor, utterly rejected and cast off by him; forever shut out of his presence; the prisoner of his justice; an everlasting inhabitant of the infernal world. The saints, on the contrary, are the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem; members of the family of the glorious King of heaven; the children of God; the brethren and spouse of his dear Son; heirs of God; joint heirs with Christ; kings and priests unto God. And they are extremely different really. The devil, an account of his hateful nature, and those accursed dispositions which reign in him, is called Satan; the adversary; abaddon and apollyon; the great destroyer; the wolf; the roaring lion; the great dragon; the old serpent. The saints are represented as God's holy ones; his anointed ones; the excellent of the earth; the meek of the earth; lambs and doves; Christ's little children; having the image of God.

pure in heart; God's jewels; lilies in Christ's garden; plants of paradise; stars of heaven; temples of the LIVING GOD. The saints, so far as they are saints, are as diverse from the devil, as heaven is from hell; and much more contrary than light is to darkness; and the eternal state that they are appointed to, is answerably diverse and contrary.

Now it is not reasonable to suppose, that a being, in any respect as Satan is, or the being the subject of any of the same properties, qualifications, affections or actions, that are in him, is any certain evidence that persons are thus exceeding different from him; and in circumstances so diverse, and appointed to an eternal state, so extremely contrary in all respects. Wicked men are in scripture called "the children of the devil." Now is it reasonable to suppose, that men's being in any respect as the devil is, can be a certain sign that they are not his children, but the children of the infinitely holy and blessed God? We are informed, that wicked men shall, hereafter, have their part with devils; shall be sentenced to the same everlasting fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels. Now, can a man's being like the devil in any respect, be a sure token that he shall not have his part with him, but with glorious angels, and with Jesus Christ, dwelling with him where he is, that he may behold and partake of his glory?

IMPROVEMENT.

The first USE may lie in several inferences, for our instruction.

I. From what has been said, it may be inferred, by parity of reason, that nothing that damned men do, or ever will experience, can be any sure sign of grace.

Damned men are like the devils; are conformed to them in nature and state. They have nothing better in them than the devils; have no higher principles in their hearts; experience nothing, and do nothing of a more excellent kind: As they are the children and servants of the devil, and as such shall dwell with him, and be partakers with him, of the same misery. As Christ says, concerning the saints in their future

state, Matth. xxii. 30, that "they shall be as the angels of God in heaven." So it may be said concerning ungodly men, in their future state; that they shall be as the fallen, wicked angels in hell.

Each of the forementioned reasons, given to shew the truth of the doctrine, with respect to devils, holds good with respect to damned men. Damned men have no degree of holiness; and therefore, those things which are nothing beyond what they have, cannot be holy experiences. So it is true that the damned men are not only absolutely destitute of all true holiness, but they have not so much as any common grace. And lastly, it is unreasonable to suppose, that a person's being in any respect as the damned in hell are, should be a certain sign that they are very unlike and opposite to them, and hereafter shall not have their portion with them.

II. We may hence infer, that no degree of speculative knowledge of things of religion, is any certain sign of saving grace. The devil, before his fall, was among those bright and glorious angels of heaven, which are represented as morning stars and flames of fire, that excel in strength and wisdom. And though he be now become sinful, yet his sin has not abolished the faculties of the angelic nature; as when man fell, he did not lose the faculties of the human nature. Sin destroys spiritual principles, but not the natural faculties. It is true, sin, when in full dominion, entirely prevents the exercise of the natural faculties, in holy and spiritual understanding; and lays many impediments in the way of their proper exercise in other respects: It lays the natural faculty of reason, under great disadvantages, by the many and strong prejudices which the mind is brought under the power of: And in fallen men, the faculties of the soul, are doubtless greatly impeded in their exercise, through that great weakness and disorder of the corporeal organ, which it is strictly united to; which is the consequence of sin. But there seems to be nothing in the nature of sin or moral corruption, that has any tendency to destroy the natural capacity, or even to diminish it, properly speaking. If sin were of such a nature, as necessarily to have that tendency and effect, then it might be expected that wicked men, in

a future state, where they are given up entirely to the unrestrained exercise of their corruptions and lusts, and sin is, in all respects, brought to its greatest perfection in them, would have the capacity of their souls greatly diminished: Which we have no reason to suppose; but rather on the contrary, that their capacities are greatly enlarged, and that their actual knowledge is vastly increased; and that even with respect to the Divine Being, and the things of religion, and the great concerns of the immortal souls of men; and that with regard to these things, the eyes of wicked men are opened; and they, in some respects, emerge out of darkness into clear light, when they go into another world.

The greatness of the abilities of the devils, may be argued from the representation in Eph. vi. 12. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers," &c. The same may also be argued from what the scripture says of Satan's subtilty. Gen. iii. 1. 2 Cor. xi. 3. Acts xiii. 10.

And as the devil has a faculty of understanding of large capacity, so he is capable of great speculative knowledge, of the things of God, and the invisible and eternal world, as well as other things; and must needs actually have a great understanding of these things; as these are the things which have always been chiefly in his view; and as his circumstances from his first existence, have been such as have tended chiefly to engage him to attend to these things. Before his fall he was one of those angels who continually behold the face of the Father, which is in heaven. And sin has no tendency to destroy the memory; and, therefore has no tendency to blot out of it any speculative knowledge that was formerly there.

As the devil's subtilty shews his great capacity, so the way in which his subtilty is exercised and manifested, which is principally in his artful management, with respect to things of religion; his exceeding subtle representations, insinuations, reasonings, and temptations, concerning these things, demonstrates his great actual understanding of them. As in order to the being a very artful disputant in any science, though it be only to confound and deceive such as are conversant in the

science, a person had need to have a great and extensive acquaintance with the things which pertain to that science.

Thus the devil has, undoubtedly, a great degree of speculative knowledge in divinity; having been as it were, educated in the best divinity school in the universe, viz. the heaven of heavens. He must needs have such an extensive and accurate knowledge concerning the nature and attributes of God, as we, worms of the dust, in our present state, are not capable of. And he must have a far more extensive knowledge of the works of God, as of the work of creation in particular; for he was a spectator of the creation of this visible world; he was one of those morning stars that we read of, Job. xxxviii. 4, 5, 6, 7. "....who sang together, and of those sons of God that shouted for joy, when God laid the foundations of the earth, and laid the measures thereof, and stretched the line upon it." And so he must have a very great knowledge of God's works of providence: He has been a spectator of the series of these works from the beginning: He has seen how God has governed the world in all ages: He has seen the whole train of God's wonderful successive dispensations of providence towards his church, from generation to generation. And he has not been an indifferent spectator; but the great opposition which there has been between God and him, in the whole course of those dispensations, has necessarily greatly engaged his attention in the strictest observation of them. He must have a great degree of knowledge concerning Jesus Christ as the Saviour of men, and the nature and method of the work of redemption, and the wonderful wisdom of God in this contrivance. It is that work of God wherein, above all others, God has acted in opposition to him, and in which he has chiefly set himself in opposition to God. It is with relation to this affair, that that mighty warfare has been maintained, which has been carried on between Michael and his angels, and the devil and his angels, through all ages from the beginning of the world, and especially since Christ appeared in the world. The devil has had enough to engage his attention to the steps of divine wisdom in this work; for it is to that wisdom he has opposed his subtilty; and he has seen and found, to his great disap-

pointment, and unspeakable torment, how divine wisdom, as exercised in that work, has baffled and confounded his devices. He has a great knowledge of the things of another world; for the things of that world are in his immediate view. He has a great knowledge of heaven; for he has been an inhabitant of that world of glory; and he has a great knowledge of hell, and the nature of its misery; for he is the first inhabitant of hell; and above all the other inhabitants, has experience of its torments, and has felt them constantly, for more than fifty-seven hundred years. He must have a great knowledge of the holy scriptures; for it is evident he is not hindered from knowing what is written there, by the use he made of the words of scripture in his temptation of our Saviour. And if he can know, he has much opportunity to know, and must needs have a disposition to know, with the greatest exactness; that he may, to greater effect, pervert and wrest the scripture, and prevent such an effect of the word of God on the hearts of men, as shall tend to overthrow his kingdom. He must have a great knowledge of the nature of mankind; their capacity; their dispositions, and the corruptions of their hearts: For he has had long and great observation and experience. The heart of man is what he had chiefly to do with in his subtle devices, mighty efforts, restless and indefatigable operations and exertions of himself from the beginning of the world.... And it is evident that he has a great speculative knowledge of the nature of experimental religion, by his being able to imitate it so artfully, and in such a manner, as to transform himself into an angel of light.

Therefore it is manifest, from my text and doctrine, that no degree of speculative knowledge of things of religion, is any certain sign of true piety. Whatever clear notions a man may have of the attributes of God, and doctrines of the Trinity; the nature of the two covenants; the economy of the persons of the Trinity, and the part which each person has in the affair of man's redemption; if he can discourse never so excellently of the offices of Christ, and the way of salvation by him, and the admirable methods of divine wisdom, and the harmony of the various attributes of God in that way; if he

can talk never so clearly and exactly of the method of the justification of a sinner, and of the nature of conversion, and the operations of the Spirit of God in applying the redemption of Christ; giving good distinctions; happily solving difficulties, and answering objections, in a manner tending greatly to the enlightening of the ignorant; to the edification of the church of God, and the conviction of gainsayers, and the great increase of light in the world: If he has more knowledge of this sort than hundreds of true saints of an ordinary education, and most divines, yet all is no certain evidence of any degree of saving grace in the heart.

It is true, the scripture often speaks of knowledge of divine things, as what is peculiar to true saints; as in John xvii. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Matth. xi. 27. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Psalm. ix. 10. "They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee." Philip. iii. 8. "I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." But then we must understand it of a different kind of knowledge, from that speculative understanding which the devil has to so great a degree. It will also be allowed, that the spiritual, saving knowledge of God and divine things greatly promotes speculative knowledge, as it engages the mind in its search into things of this kind, and much assists to a distinct understanding of them, so that, other things being equal, they that have spiritual knowledge, are much more likely than others to have a good doctrinal acquaintance with things of religion, but yet such acquaintance may be no distinguishing characteristic of true saints.

III. It may also be inferred from what has been observed, that for persons merely to yield a speculative assent to the doctrines of religion as true, is no certain evidence of a state of grace. My text tells us, that the devils believe, and as they believe that there is one God, so they believe the truth of the doctrines of religion in general. The devil is orthodox in his

faith; he believes the true scheme of doctrine; he is no Deist, Socinian, Arian, Pelagian, or Antinomian; the articles of his faith are all sound, and what he is thoroughly established in.

Therefore for a person to believe the doctrines of Christianity, merely from the influence of things speculative, or from the force of arguments, as discerned only by speculation, is no evidence of grace.

Though it is probably a very rare thing for unregenerate men to have a strong persuasion of the truth of the doctrines of religion, especially such of them as are very mysterious, and much above the comprehension of reason; Yea, it is manifest, that we have no warrant to determine, that it can never be so, or to look upon such a persuasion, as an infallible evidence of grace; and that no person can safely determine his state to be good from such an evidence. Yet if he, not only himself, seems to be very confident of the truth of Christianity and its doctrines, but is able to argue most strongly for the proof of them; yet in this he goes nothing beyond the devil, who, doubtless, has a great knowledge of the rational arguments, by which the truth of the Christian religion, and its several principles are evinced.

And, therefore, when the scripture speaks of *believing that Jesus is the Son of God*, as a sure evidence of grace, as in 1 John v 1, and other places, it must be understood, not of a mere speculative assent, but of another kind and manner of believing, which is called the faith of God's elect. Titus i. 1. There is a spiritual conviction of the truth which is, a believing with the whole heart, peculiar to true saints, of which I would speak particularly by and by.

IV. It may be inferred from the doctrine which has been insisted on, that it is no certain sign, that persons are savingly converted....that they have been subjects of very great distress and terrors of mind, through apprehensions of God's wrath, and fears of damnation.

That the devils are the subjects of great terrors through apprehensions of God's wrath, and fears of future effects of it, is implied in my text, which speaks not only of their believing,

but trembling. It must be no small degree of terror, which should make those principalities and powers, those mighty, proud and sturdy beings to tremble.

There are many terrors, that some persons, who are concerned for their salvation, are the subjects of, which are not from any proper awakenings of conscience, or apprehensions of truth, but from melancholy, or frightful impressions on their imagination, or some groundless apprehensions, and the delusions, and false suggestions of Satan. But if they have had never so great and long continued terrors, from real awakenings and convictions of truth, and views of things as they are; this is no more than what is in the devils, and will be in all wicked men in another world. However stupid and senseless most ungodly men are now, all will be effectually awakened at last: There will be no such thing as slumbering in hell. There are many that cannot be awakened by the most solemn warnings and awful threatenings of the word of God, the most alarming discourses from the pulpit, and the most awakening and awful providences; but all will be thoroughly awakened by the sound of the last trumpet, and the appearance of Christ to judgment, and all sorts will then be filled with most amazing terrors, from apprehensions of truth, and seeing things as they be; when "The kings of the earth and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, (such as were the most lofty and stout hearted, most ready to treat the things of religion with contempt) shall hide themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and say to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" Rev. vi. 15, 16, 17.

Therefore, if persons have first been awakened, and then afterwards have had comfort and joy, it is no certain sign that their comforts are of the right kind, that they were preceded by very great terrors.

V. It may be further inferred from the doctrine, That no work of the law on men's hearts, in conviction of guilt, and just desert of punishment, is a sure argument that a person has been savingly converted.

Not only are no awakenings and terrors any certain evidence of this, but no mere legal work whatsoever, though carried to the utmost extent that it can be; nothing wherein there is no grace or spiritual light, but only the mere conviction of natural conscience, and those acts and operations of the mind which are the result of this; and so are, as it were, merely forced by the clear light of conscience, without the concurrence of the heart and inclination with that light: I say, these things are no certain sign of the saving grace of God, or that a person was ever savingly converted.

The evidence of this, from my text and doctrine, is demonstrative; because the devils are the subjects of these things; and all wicked men that shall finally perish, will be the subjects of the same. Natural conscience is not extinguished in [illegible] damned in hell; but, on the contrary, remains, and in vigor in its greatest strength, and is brought to its most perfect exercise; more fully to do its proper office in God's righteous judgment to condemn those rebels against the light of nature and their own consciences. God's just wrath and vengeance will be the means to torment them, and be as a never dying worm within them. Wicked men [illegible] the light and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

holy and righteous a God JEHOVAH is, whose authority they have despised; and they shall know that he is righteous and holy in their destruction. This all the ungodly will be convinced of at the day of judgment, by the bringing to light all their wickedness of heart and practice, and setting all their sins with all their aggravations, in order, not only in the view of others, even of the whole world, but in the view of their own consciences. This is threatened, Psalm l. 21. "These things thou hast done, and I kept silence: Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself: But I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes." Compare this with the four first verses of the psalm. The end of the day of judgment is not to find out what is just, as it is with human judgments, but it is to manifest what is just; to make known God's justice in the judgment which he will execute, to men's own consciences, and to the world. And therefore that day is called "the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." Rom. ii. 5. Now sinners often cavil against the justice of God's dispensations, and particularly the justice of the punishment which God threatens for their sins, excusing themselves, and condemning God: But when God comes to manifest their wickedness in the light of that day, and to call them to an account, they will be speechless; Matth. xxii. 11, 12. "And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? and he was speechless." When the King of heaven and earth comes to judgment, their consciences will be so perfectly enlightened and convinced by the allsearching light they shall then stand in, that their mouths will be effectually stopped, as to all excuses for themselves, all pleading of their own righteousness to excuse or justify them, and all objections against the justice of their judge, that their conscience will condemn them only, and not God.

Therefore it follows from the doctrine, that it can be no certain sign of grace, that persons have had great convictions of sin—have had their sins of life, with their aggravations, re-

markably set before them, so as greatly to affect and terrify them; and withal, have had a great sight of the wickedness of their hearts, and been convinced of the greatness of the sin of unbelief, and of the inexcusableness and heinousness of their most secret spiritual iniquities; and have been brought to be convinced of the utter insufficiency of their own righteousness, and to despair of being recommended to God by it; have been as much brought off from their own righteousness, as ever any are under a mere legal humiliation; have been convinced that they are wholly without excuse before God, and deserve damnation, and that God would be just in executing the threatened punishment upon them, though it be so dreadful. All these things will be in all the ungodly at the day of judgment, when they shall stand with devils, at the left hand, and shall be doomed, as accursed, to everlasting fire with them.

Indeed there will be no submission in them. Their conscience will be freely convinced that God is just in their condemnation, but yet their wills will not be bowed to God's justice. There will be no acquiescence of mind in that divine attribute—no yielding of the soul to God's sovereignty, but the highest degree of enmity and opposition. A true submission of the heart and will to the justice and sovereignty of God, is therefore allowed to be something peculiar to true converts, being something which the devils and damned souls are, and ever will be far from; and which a mere work of the law, and convictions of conscience, however great and clear, will never bring men to.

When sinners are the subjects of great convictions of conscience, and a remarkable work of the law, it is only a transacting the business of the day of judgment in the conscience before hand: God sits enthroned in the conscience, as at the last day he will sit enthroned in the clouds of heaven; the sinner is arraigned, as it were, at God's bar, and God appears in his awful greatness, as a just and holy, sinhating, and sinrevenging God, as he will then. The sinner's iniquities are brought to light....his sins set in order before him...the hidden things of darkness, and the counsels of the heart are made manifest ....as it will be then: Many witnesses do, as it were, rise up

against the sinner under convictions of conscience, as they will against the wicked at the day of judgment: And the books are opened, particularly the book of God's strict and holy law, is opened in the conscience, and its rules applied for the condemnation of the sinner; which is the book that will be opened at the day of judgment, as the grand rule of judgment, to all such wicked men as have lived under it:—And the sentence of the law is pronounced against the sinner, and the justice of the sentence made manifest, as it will be at the day of judgment. The conviction of a sinner at the day of judgment, will be a work of the law, as well as the conviction of conscience in this world; and the work of the law (if the work be merely legal) besure, is never carried further in the consciences of sinners now, than it will be at that day, when its work will be perfect, in thoroughly stopping the sinner's mouth. Rom. iii. 19. "Now we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." Every mouth shall be stopped by the law, either now or hereafter, and all the world shall become *sensibly* guilty before God....guilty of death....deserving of damnation. And, therefore, if sinners have been the subjects of a great work of the law, and have thus become guilty, and their mouths have been stopped; it is no certain sign that ever they have been converted.

Indeed, the want of a thorough sense of guilt, and desert of punishment, and conviction of the justice of God, in threatening damnation, is a good negative sign; it is a sign that a person never was converted, and truly brought, with the whole soul, to embrace Christ, as a Saviour from this punishment: For it is easily demonstrable, that there is no such thing as entirely and cordially accepting an offer from God, of a Saviour from a punishment that he threatens, which we think we do not deserve. But the having such a conviction is no certain sign, that persons have true faith, or have ever truly received Christ as their Saviour. And if persons have great comfort, joy and confidence, suddenly let into their minds, after great convictions, of such a kind as has been mentioned, it is no in-

fallible evidence that their comforts are built on a good foundation.

It is manifest therefore, that too much stress has been laid by many persons on a great work of the law, preceding their comforts; who seem not only to have looked on such a work of the law, as necessary to precede faith, but also to have esteemed it as the chief evidence of the truth and genuineness of succeeding faith and comforts. By this means, it is to be feared very many have been deceived, and established in a false hope. And what is to be seen in the event of things, in multitudes of instances, confirms this. It may be safely allowed, not to be so unusual for great convictions of conscience to prove abortive, and fail of a good issue, as for less convictions; and that more generally, when the Spirit of God proceeds so far with sinners, in the work of the law, as to give them a great sight of their hearts, and of the heinousness of their spiritual iniquities, and to convince them that they are without excuse, and that all their righteousness can do nothing to merit God's favors, but that they lie justly exposed to God's eternal vengeance without mercy, a work of saving conversion follows.....But we have no warrant to say, it is universally so, or to lay it down as an infallible rule, that when convictions of conscience have gone thus far, saving faith and repentance will surely follow. If any should think they have ground for such a determination, because they cannot conceive what end God should have in carrying a work of conviction to such a length, and so preparing the heart for faith, and, after all, never giving saving faith to the soul; I desire it may be considered, where will be the end of our doubts and difficulties, if we think ourselves sufficient to determine so positively and particularly concerning God's ends and designs in what he does. It may be asked such an objector, what is God's end in giving a sinner any degree of the strivings of his Spirit, and conviction of conscience, when he afterwards suffers it to come to nothing, and to prove in vain? If he may give some degree that may finally be in vain, who shall set the bounds, and say how great the degree shall be? Who can, on sure grounds, determine, that when a sinner has so much of that conviction, which the devils and

damned in hell have, true faith and eternal salvation will be the certain consequence. This we may certainly determine, that, if the apostle's argument in the text be good, not any thing whatsoever, that the devils have, is certainly connected with such a consequence. Seeing sinners, while such, are capable of the most perfect convictions, and will have them at the day of judgment, and in hell; who shall say, that God never shall cause reprobates to anticipate the future judgment and damnation in that respect? And if he does so, who shall say to him, what doest thou? or call him to account concerning his ends in so doing. Not but that many possible wise ends might be thought of, and mentioned, if it were needful, or I had now room for it.—The Spirit of God is often quenched by the exercise of the wickedness of men's hearts, after he has gone far in a work of conviction; so that their convictions never have a good issue. And who can say that sinners, by the exercise of their opposition and enmity against God, (which is not at all mortified by the greatest legal convictions, neither in the damned in hell, nor sinners on earth) may not provoke God to take his Spirit from them, even after he has proceeded the greatest length in a work of conviction? Who can say, that God never is provoked to destroy some, after he has brought them, as it were, through the wilderness, even to the edge of the land of rest? As he slew some of the Israelites, even in the plains of Moab.

And let it be considered, where is our warrant in scripture, to make use of any legal convictions, or any method or order of successive events in a work of the law, and consequent comforts, as a sure sign of regeneration. The scripture is abundant, in expressly mentioning evidences of grace, and of a state of favor with God, as characteristics of the true saints: But where do we ever find such things as these amongst those evidences? Or where do we find any other signs insisted on, besides grace itself, its nature, exercises, and fruits? These were the evidences that Job relied upon: These were the things that the Psalmist every where insists upon, as evidences of his sincerity, and particularly in the cxixth psalm, from

the beginning to the end: These were the signs that Hezekiah trusted to in his sickness.

These were the characteristics given of those that are truly happy, by our Saviour, in the beginning of his sermon in the mount: These are the things that Christ mentions, as the true evidences of being his real disciples, in his last and dying discourse to his disciples, in the xivth, xvth, and xvith chapters of John, and in his intercessory prayer, chap. xvii:....These are the things which the Apostle Paul often speaks of as evidences of his sincerity, and sure title to a crown of glory: And these are the things he often mentions to others, in his epistles, as the proper evidences of real Christianity, a justified state, and a title to glory. He insists on the fruits of the Spirit; love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperence, as the proper evidences of being Christ's, and living in the Spirit: Gal. v. 22....25. It is that charity, or divine love, which is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy, &c. that he insists on, as the most essential evidence of true godliness; without which, all other things are nothing. Such are the signs which the apostle James insists on, as the proper evidence of a truly wise and good man: James iii. 17. "The wisdom that is from Above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." And such are the signs of true Christianity, which the Apostle John insists on throughout his epistles. And we never have any where in the Bible, from the beginning to the end of it, any other signs of godliness given than such as these. If persons have such things as these apparently in them, it ought to be determined that they are truly converted, without its being insisted that it be first known what steps or method the Spirit of God took to introduce these things into the soul, which oftentimes is altogether untraceable. All the works of God are, in some respects, unsearchable: but the scripture often represents the works of the Spirit of God as peculiarly so. Isa. xl. 13...." Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor, hath taught him?" Eccl. xi. v. "As thou knowest not what is the way of

the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; so thou knowest not the works of God, who maketh all."....John iii. 8. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

VI. It follows from my text and doctrine, That it is no certain sign of grace, that persons have earnest desires and longings after salvation.

The devils, doubtless, long for deliverance from the misery they suffer, and from that greater misery which they expect. If they tremble through fear of it, they must, necessarily, earnestly desire to be delivered from it. Wicked men are, in scripture, represented as longing for the privileges of the righteous, when the door is shut, and they are shut out from among them; they come to the door, and cry, Lord, Lord, open to us. Therefore we are not to look on all desires, or all desires that are very earnest and vehement, as certain evidences of a pious heart. There are earnest desires of a religious nature, which the saints have, that are the proper breathings of a new nature, and distinguishing qualities of true saints. But there are also longings which unregenerate men may have, which are often mistaken for marks of godliness. They think they hunger and thirst after righteousness, and have earnest desires after God and Christ, and long for heaven; when indeed, all is to be resolved into desires of salvation from selflove; and so is a longing which arises from no higher principles than the earnest desires of devils.

VII. It may be inferred from what has been observed, That persons who have no grace may have a great apprehension of an external glory in things heavenly and divine, and of whatsoever is external pertaining to things of religion.

If persons have impressed strongly on their minds ideas of that sort which are obtained by the external senses, whether they are of that kind that enter by the ear, as any kind of sound; whether it be the most pleasant music, or words spoken of excellent signification; words of scripture, or any other, immediately suggested, as though they were spoken, though they

seem to be never so suitable to their case, or adapted to the subject of their meditations. Or whether they are of that kind that are obtained by the eye, as ideas of a visible beauty and glory, a shining light, and external glory of heaven, golden streets, walls and gates of precious stones, splendid palaces, glorious inhabitants shining forth as the sun, a most magnificent throne surrounded by angels and saints in shining ranks; or any thing external, belonging to Jesus Christ, either in his humbled state, as of Jesus hanging on the cross, with his crown of thorns, his wounds open, and blood trickling down; or in his glorified state, with awful majesty, or ravishing beauty and sweetness in his countenance, his face shining above the brightness of the sun, and the like: These things are no certain signs of grace.

Multitudes that are now in hell, will have ideas of the external glory that pertains to things heavenly, far beyond what ever any have in this world. They will see all that external glory and beauty, in which Christ will appear at the day of Judgment, when the sun shall be turned into darkness before him; which, doubtless, will be ten thousand times greater than ever was impressed on the imagination of either saints or sinners in this present state, or ever was conceived by any mortal man.

VIII. It may be inferred from the doctrine, that persons who have no grace may have a very great and affecting sense of many divine things on their hearts.

The devil has not only great speculative knowledge, but he has a sense of many divine things, which deeply affects him, and is most strongly impressed on his heart. As,

1. The devils and damned souls have a great sense of the vast importance of the things of another world. They are in the invisible world, and they see and know how great the things of that world are: Their experience teaches them in the most affecting manner. They have a great sense of the worth of salvation, and the worth of immortal souls, and the vast importance of those things that concern men's eternal welfare. The parable in the latter end of the 16th chapter of Luke, teaches this, in representing the rich man in hell, as in-

treating that Lazarus might be sent to his five brothers, to testify unto them, lest they should come to that place of torment. They who endure the torments of hell have doubtless a most lively and affecting sense of the vastness of an endless eternity, and of the comparative momentariness of this life, and the vanity of the concerns and enjoyments of time. They are convinced effectually, that all the things of this world, even those that appear greatest and most important to the inhabitants of the earth, are despicable trifles, in comparison of the things of the eternal world. They have a great sense of the preciousness of time, and of the means of grace, and the inestimable value of the privileges which they enjoy who live under the gospel. They are fully sensible of the folly of those that go on in sin; neglect their opportunities; make light of the counsels and warnings of God; and bitterly lament their exceeding folly in their own sins, by which they have brought on themselves so great and remediless misery. When sinners, by woful experience, know the dreadful issue of their evil way, they will mourn at the last, saying, how have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me !....Prov, iv. 11....13.

Therefore, however true godliness is now attended with a great sense of the importance of divine things, and it is rare that men that have no grace do maintain such a sense in any steady and persevering manner; yet it is manifest those things are no certain evidences of grace. Unregenerate men may have a sense of the importance of the things of eternity, and the vanity of the things of time; the worth of immortal souls; the preciousness of time and means of grace, and the folly of the way of allowed sin: And may have such a sense of those things, as may deeply affect them, and cause them to mourn for their own sins, and be much concerned for others; though it be true, they have not these things in the same manner, and in all respects from the same principles and views as godly men have them.

2. Devils and damned men have a strong and most affecting sense of the awful greatness and majesty of God. The awful

majesty of God is greatly made manifest in the execution of divine wrath, which they are the subjects of. The making this known, is one thing God has in design in his vengeance on his enemies. Rom. ix. 22. "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction." The devils tremble before this great and terrible God, and under a strong sense of his awful majesty. It is greatly manifested to them, and damned souls now; but shall be manifested in a further degree, in that day, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, in flaming fire, to take vengeance upon them; and when they shall earnestly desire to fly, and be hid from the face of him that sits on the throne, ("which shall be, because of the glory of his majesty." Isa. ii. 10) and when they shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. When Christ comes at the last day, in the glory of his Father, every eye shall see him in that glory, (in this respect, that they shall see his terrible majesty) and they also that pierced him, Rev. i. 7. Both those devils, and wicked men, which tormented and insulted him when he appeared in meanness and ignominy, shall then see him in the glory of his Father.

It is evident, therefore, that a sense of God's terrible majesty is no certain evidence of saving grace; for we see that wicked men and devils are capable of it; yea, many wicked men in this world have actually had it. This is a manifestation which God made of himself, in the sight of that wicked congregation at Mount Sinai, which they saw, and were deeply affected with, so that all the people that were in the camp trembled.

3. Devils and damned men have some kind of conviction and sense of all the attributes of God, both natural and moral, that is strong and very affecting.

The devils know God's almighty power; they saw great manifestation of it, when they saw God lay the foundation of the earth, &c. and were much affected with it; and they have seen innumerable other great demonstrations of his power;

as in the universal deluge, the destruction of Sodom, the wonders in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness; the causing the sun to stand still in Joshua's time and many others. And they had a very affecting manifestation of God's mighty power on themselves, in casting all their host down from heaven into hell; and have continual affecting experience of it, in God's reserving them in strong chains of darkness, and in the strong pains they feel, and will hereafter have far more affecting experience of it, when they shall be punished from the glory of God's power, with that mighty destruction which they now tremble in expectation of. So the devils have a great knowledge of the wisdom of God: They have had unspeakably more opportunity and occasion to observe it in the work of creation, and also in the works of providence, than any mortal man has ever had; and have been themselves the subjects of innumerable affecting manifestations of it, in God's disappointing and confounding them in their most subtle devices, in so wonderful and amazing a manner. So they see and find the infinite purity and holiness of the divine nature in the most affecting manner, as this appears in his infinite hatred of sin, in what they feel of the dreadful effects of that hatred. They know already by what they suffer, and will know hereafter to a greater degree, and far more affecting manner, that such is the opposition of God's nature to sin, that it is like a consuming fire, that burns with infinite vehemence against it; they will feel the vehement heat of that fire in a very dreadful manner. They also will see the holiness of God, as exercised in his love to righteousness and holiness, in what they will see of the reward of the righteousness of Christ, and the holiness of his people, in the glory of Christ and his church; which also will be very affecting to devils and wicked men. And the exact justice of God will be manifested to them in the clearest and strongest, most convincing and most affecting light, at the day of judgment; when they will also see great and affecting demonstrations of the riches of his grace, in the marvellous fruits of his love to the vessels of mercy; when they shall see them at the right hand of Christ shining as the sun in the kingdom of their father, and shall

hear the blessed sentence pronounced upon them ; and will be deeply affected with it, as seems naturally implied in Luke xiii. 28, 29. The devils know God's truth, and therefore they believe his threatenings, and tremble in expectation of their accomplishment. And wicked men that now doubt his truth, and dare not trust his word, will hereafter, in the most convincing, affecting manner, find his word to be true in all that he has threatened, and will see that he is faithful to his promises in the rewards of his saints. Devils and damned men know that God is eternal and unchangeable ; and therefore they despair of there ever being an end to their misery.

Therefore it is manifest, that merely persons' having an affecting sense of some, or even of all God's attributes, is no certain sign that they have the true grace of God in their hearts.

Object. Here possibly some may object against the force of the foregoing reasoning, That ungodly men in this world are in exceeding different circumstances from those which the devils are in, and from those which wicked men will be in, at the day of judgment ; those things which are visible and present to these, are now future and invisible to the other ; and wicked men in this world are in the body, that clogs and hinders the soul, and are encompassed with objects that blind and stupify them ; and therefore it does not follow, that because the wicked in another world have a great apprehension and lively sense of such and such things without grace, that ungodly men in their present state may have the same.

Ans. To this I answer....It is not supposed that ever men in this life have all those things which have been mentioned, to the same degree that the devils and damned have them. None supposes that ever any in this life have terrors of conscience to an equal degree with them. It is not to be supposed that any mortal man, whether godly or ungodly, has an equal degree of speculative knowledge with the devil. And, as was just now observed, the wicked, at the day of judgment, will have a vastly greater idea of the external glory of Christ than ever any have in the present state. So, doubtless, they will have a far greater sense of God's awful greatness and ter-

rible majesty, than any could subsist under in this frail state. So we may well conclude, that the devils and wicked men in hell have a greater and more affecting sense of the vastness of eternity, and (in some respects) a greater sense of the importance of the things of another world, than any here have, and they have also longings after salvation to an higher degree than any wicked men in this world.

But yet it is evident, that men in this world may have things of the same kind with devils and damned men. The same sort of light in the understanding, the same views, and the same affections....the same sense of things....the same kind of impressions on the mind, and on the heart. If the objection is against the conclusiveness of the reasoning that has been made use of to prove this, it is against the conclusiveness of that reasoning which is the apostle's, more properly than mine. The apostle judged it a conclusive argument against such as thought their believing there was one God, an evidence of their being gracious, that the devils believed the same. So the argument is exactly the same against such as think they have grace, because they believe God is a holy God, or because they have a sense of the awful majesty of God. The same may be observed of other things that have been mentioned. My text has reference not only to the act of the understanding of devils in believing, but to that affection of their hearts, which accompanies the views they have; as trembling is an effect of the affection of the heart; which shews, that if men have both the same views of understanding, and also the same affections of heart, that the devils have, it is no sign of grace.

And as to the particular degree, to which these things may be carried in men, in this world, without grace, it appears not to be safe to go about so to ascertain and fix it, as to make use of it as an infallible rule to determine men's state. I know not where we have any rule to go by to fix the precise degree, in which God, by his providence, or his common influences on the mind, will excite in wicked men in this world, the same views and affections which the wicked have in another world; which, it is manifest, the former are capable of as well as the latter, having the same faculties and principles of soul, and

which views and affections, it is evident, they often are actually the subjects of in some degree....some in a greater, and some in a less degree. The infallible evidences of grace, which are laid down in scripture, are of another kind; they are all of a holy and spiritual nature, and, therefore, things of that kind, which a heart, that is wholly carnal and corrupt, cannot receive, or have any experience of. I Cor. ii. 14.

I might also here add, that observation and experience, in very many instances, seem to confirm what scripture and reason teach in these things.

The second USE may be of selfexamination.

Let the things which have been observed put all on examining themselves, and enquiring whether they have any better evidences of saving grace, than such as have been mentioned.

We see how the infallible Spirit of God, in the text, plainly represents the things the devils are the subjects of, as no sure sign of grace. And we have now, in some instances, observed how far the devils and damned men go, and will go, in their experience....their knowledge of divine things....their belief of truth....their awakenings and terrors of conscience.... their conviction of guilt, and of the justice of God, in their eternal, dreadful damnation....their longings after salvation.... their sight of the external glory of Christ, and heavenly things ....their sense of the vast importance of the things of religion, and another world....their sense of the awful greatness and terrible majesty of God, yea, of all God's attributes. These things may well put us on serious selfexamination, whether we have any thing to evidence our good estate, beyond what the devils are the subjects of. Christ said to his disciples, "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." So the Spirit of Christ, in his Apostle James, does, in effect, say, in my text, except what you experience in your souls go beyond the experiences of devils, ye shall, in no case enter into the kingdom of God.

Here it may be, some will be ready to say, I have something besides all these things, which have been mentioned; I have things which the devils have not, even love and joy.

I answer, you may have something besides the experiences of devils, and yet nothing beyond them. Though the experience be different, yet it may not be owing to any different principle, but only the different circumstances, under which these principles are exercised. The principles, from whence the forementioned things in devils and damned men do arise, are these two; natural understanding and selflove. It is from natural understanding or reason that they have such a degree of knowledge in divine things and such a belief of them. It is from these principles of natural understanding and selflove, as exercised about their own dispositions and actions, and God as their judge, that they have natural conscience, and have such convictions of conscience as have been spoken of. It is from these principles that they have such a sense of the importance of the things of religion and the eternal world, and such longings after salvation. It is from the joint exercise of these two principles that they are so sensible of the awful majesty of God, and of all the attributes of the divine nature, and so greatly affected with them: And it is from these principles, joined with external sense, the wicked, at the day of judgment, will have so great an apprehension of, and will be so greatly affected by, the external glory of Christ and his saints. And that you have a kind of love, or gratitude and joy, which devils and damned men have not, may possibly not arise from any other principles in your heart different from these two, but only from these principles, as exercised in different circumstances.

As for instance, your being a subject of the restraining grace of God and being under circumstances of hope, and the receipt of mercy. The natural understanding and selflove of devils possibly might affect them in the same manner, if they were in the same circumstances. If your love to God, has its first source from nothing else than a supposed immediate divine witness, or any other supposed evidence, that Christ died for you in particular, and that God loves you, it springs from no higher principle than selflove, which is a principle that reigns in the hearts of devils. Selflove is sufficient, without grace, to cause men to love those that love them, or that they

imagine love them, and make much of them; Luke vi. 32. "For if ye love them which love you, what thank have you? For sinners also love those that love them." And would not the hearts of devils be filled with great joy, if they, by any means should take up a confident persuasion that God had pardoned them, and was become their friend, and that they should be delivered from that wrath which they now are in trembling expectation of? If the devils go so far as you have heard, even in their circumstances, being totally cast off, and given up to unrestrained wickedness, being without hope, knowing that God is and ever will be their enemy, they suffering his wrath without mercy; how far may we reasonably suppose they might go, in imitation of grace and pious experience, if they had the same degree of knowledge, as clear views, and as strong conviction, under circumstances of hope, and offers of mercy; and being the subjects of common grace, restraining their corruptions, and assisting and exciting the natural principles of reason, conscience, &c. Such things as devils are the subjects of; such great conviction of conscience; such a sense of the importance of eternal things; such affecting views of the awful majesty, greatness, power, holiness, justice, and truth of God, and such a sense of his great grace to the saints, if they, or any thing like them, should be in the heart of a sinner, in this world, at the same time that he, from some strong impression on his imagination of Christ appearing to him, or sweet words spoken to him, or by some other means, has suddenly, after great terrors, imbibed a strong confidence, that now this great God is his friend and father, has released him from all the misery he feared, and has promised him eternal happiness; I say, such things would, doubtless, vastly heighten his ecstasy of joy, and raise the exercise of natural gratitude, (that principle from whence sinners love those that love them) and would occasion a great imitation of many graces in strong exercises. Is it any wonder then, that multitudes under such a sort of affection are deceived? Especially when they have devils to help forward the delusion, whose great subtilty has chiefly been exercised in deceiving mankind, through all past generations.

Enquiry. Here possibly some may be ready to enquire, If there may be so many things which men may experience from no higher principles than are in the minds and hearts of devils; what are those exercises and affections, that are of a higher nature, which I must find in my heart, and which I may justly look upon as sure signs of the saving grace of God's Spirit.

Ans. I answer; those exercises and affections which are good evidences of grace, differ from all that the devils are the subjects of, and all that can arise from such principles as are in their hearts, in two things, viz. their foundation and their tendency.

1. They differ in their foundation, or in that belonging to them, which is most fundamental in them, and the foundation of all the rest which pertains to them, viz. an apprehension or sense of the supreme holy beauty and comeliness of divine things, as they are in themselves, or in their own nature.

This the devils and damned in hell are, and forever will be entirely destitute of; this the devils once had, while they stood in their integrity; but this they wholly lost when they fell: And this is the only thing that can be mentioned, pertaining to the devil's apprehension and sense of the Divine Being, that he did lose. Nothing else belonging to the knowledge of God, can be devised, that he is destitute of. It has been observed, that there is no one attribute of the divine nature, but what he is sensible of, and knows, and has a strong and very affecting conviction of; and this, I think is evident and undeniable. But the supreme beauty of the divine nature he is altogether blind to: He sees no more of it than a man born perfectly blind does of colors. The great sight he has of the attributes of God gives him an idea and strong sense of his awful majesty, but no idea of his beauty and comeliness. Though he has seen so much of God's worderful works of power, wisdom, holiness, justice, and truth, and his wonderful works of grace to mankind, this so many thousand years, and has had occasion to observe them with the strongest attention; yet all serves not to give him the least sense of his divine beauty. And though the devils should continue to exercise their mighty powers of mind

with the strongest intention; and should take things in all possible views, in every order and arrangement, yet they never will see this. So little akin is the knowledge they have to this, that the great degrees of that knowledge bring them no nearer to it. Yet the more knowledge they have of God, of that kind, the more do they hate God. That wherein the beauty of the divine nature does most essentially consist, viz. his holiness or moral excellency appears, in their eyes, furthest from beauty: It is on that very account, chiefly, that he appears hateful to them. The more holiness they see in him, the more hateful he appears: The greater their sight is of his holiness, the higher is their hatred of him raised. And because of their hatred of his holiness, they hate him the more, the more they see of his other attributes. They would hate a holy being whatever his other attributes were, but they hate such a holy being the worse for his being infinitely wise, and infinitely powerful, &c. more than they would do, if they saw in him less power and less wisdom.

The wicked at the day of judgment, will see every thing else in Christ but his beauty and amiableness. There is no one quality or property of his person that can be thought of, but what will be set before them in the strongest light at that day, but only such as consist in this. They will see him coming in the clouds of heaven in power and great glory; in the glory of his Father. They will have that view of his external glory which is vastly beyond what we can have any imagination of: And they will have the strongest and most convincing demonstrations of all his attributes and perfections. They will have a sense of his great majesty, that will be, as it were, infinitely affecting to them. They shall be made to know effectually that he is the Lord. They shall see what he is, and what he does; his nature and works shall appear in the strongest view. But his holy and infinite beauty and amiableness, which is all in all, and without which every other quality and property is nothing, and worse than nothing, they will see nothing of.

Therefore, it is a sight or sense of this that is the thing wherein does fundamentally consist the difference between those things in which the saving grace of God's Spirit consists,

and the experiences of devils and damned souls. This is the foundation of every thing else that is distinguishing in true Christian experience. This is the foundation of the faith of excellency of the things exhibited in the gospel, or sense of the divine beauty and amiableness of the scheme of doctrine there exhibited, that savingly convinces the mind that it is indeed divine, or of God. This account of the matter is plainly implied; 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." And v. 6. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." It is very evident that a saving belief of the gospel is here spoken of by the apostle, as arising from a view of the divine glory or beauty of the things it exhibits. It is by this view that the soul of a true convert is enabled, savingly, to see the sufficiency of Christ for his salvation. He that has his eyes open to behold the divine superlative beauty and loveliness of Jesus Christ, is convinced of his sufficiency to stand as a mediator between him, a guilty, hell deserving wretch, and an infinitely holy God, in an exceeding different manner than ever he can be convinced by all the arguments that are made use of by the most excellent authors or preachers.

When he once comes to see Christ's divine loveliness, he wonders no more that he is thought worthy by God the Father to be accepted for the vilest sinner. Now it is not difficult for him to conceive how the blood of Christ should be esteemed, by God, so precious, as to be worthy to be accepted as a compensation for the greatest sins. The soul now properly sees the preciousness of Christ, and so does properly see and understand the very ground and reason of his acceptableness to God, and the value God sets on his blood, obedience, and intercession. This satisfies the poor guilty soul, and gives it rest; when the finest and most elaborate discourses about the sufficiency of Christ, and suitableness of the way of salvation,

would not do it. When a man then comes to see the proper foundation of faith and affiance with his own eyes, then he believes savingly. "He that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, hath everlasting life." John vi 40. When Christ thus manifests God's name to men, then "they believe that all things, whatsoever God has given to Christ, are of him, and believe that Christ was sent of God." John xvii. 6, 7, 8..... And "they that thus know Christ's name will trust in him." Psalm ix. 10. In order to true faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God is revealed in men, Gal. i. 15, 16. And it is this sight of the divine beauty of Christ that bows the wills and draws the hearts of men. A sight of the greatness of God, in his attributes, may overwhelm men, and be more than they can endure; but the enmity and opposition of the heart may remain in its full strength, and the will remain inflexible, whereas one glimpse of the moral and spiritual glory of God, and supreme amiableness of Jesus Christ, shining into the heart, overcomes and abolishes this opposition, and inclines the soul to Christ, as it were, by an omnipotent power; so that now, not only the understanding, but the will, and the whole soul, receives and embraces the Saviour. This is most certainly the discovery, which is the first internal foundation of a saving faith in Christ, in the soul of the true convert; and not on having of it immediately suggested and revealed to the soul by a text of scripture, or any immediate outward or inward witness, that Christ loves him, or that he died for him in particular, and is his Saviour; so begetting confidence and joy, and a seeming love to Christ because he loves him; by which sort of faith and conversion (demonstratively vain and counterfeit) multitudes have been deluded. The sight of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, works true supreme love to God. This is a sight of the proper foundation of supreme love to God, viz. the supreme loveliness of his nature; and a love to him on this ground is truly above any thing that can come from a mere principle of selflove, which is in the hearts of devils as well as men. And this begets true spiritual and holy joy in the soul, which is indeed joy in God, and glorying in him, and not rejoicing in ourselves.

This sight of the beauty of divine things will excite true desires and longings of soul after those things; not like the longings of devils, or any such forced desires, as those of a man in great danger of death, after some bitter medicine that he hopes will save his life; but natural, free desires, the desires of appetite....the thirstings of a new nature, as a newborn babe desires the mother's breast, and as a hungry man longs for some pleasant food he thinks of....or, as the thirsty hart pants after the cool and clear stream.

This sense of divine beauty is the first thing in the actual change made in the soul in true conversion, and is the foundation of every thing else belonging to that change, as is evident by those words of the apostle....2 Cor. iii. 18. "But we all, with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

2. Truly gracious affections and exercises of mind differ from such as are counterfeit, which arise from no higher principles than are in the hearts of devils in their tendency, and that in these two respects.

(1.) They are of a tendency and influence very contrary to that which was especially the devil's sin, even pride. That pride was in a peculiar manner, the devil's sin, is manifest from 1 Tim. iii. 6. "Not a novice, lest, being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil." False and delusive experiences ever more tend to this, though oftentimes under the disguise of great and extraordinary humility. Spiritual pride is the prevailing temper and general character of hypocrites, deluded with false discoveries and affections.... They are, in general, of a disposition directly contrary to those two things belonging to the Christian temper, directed to by the apostle; the one in Rom. xii. 16. "Be not wise in your own conceit;" and the other in Phil. ii. 3. "Let each esteem others better than themselves."....False experience is conceited of itself, and affected with itself. Thus he that has false humility is much affected to think how he is abased before God. He that has false love is affected, when he thinks of the greatness of his love. The very food and nourishment of

false experience is to view itself, and take much notice of itself; and its very breath and life is to talk much of itself, or some way to be shewing itself. Whereas truly gracious views and affections are of a quite contrary tendency; they nourish no selfconceit....no exalting conceit of the man's own righteousness, experience, or privileges....no high conceit of his humiliations. They incline to no ostentation, nor selfexaltation, under any disguise whatsoever. But that sense of the supreme, holy beauty and glory of God and Christ, which is the foundation of them, and that only mortifies pride, and truly humbles the soul. It not only cuts off some of the outermost branches, (causing many branches to grow out where but one was before) but it strikes at the very root of pride....it alters the very nature and disposition of the heart. The light of God's beauty, and that alone, truly shews the soul its own deformity, and effectually inclines it to exalt God and abase itself.

(2.) These gracious exercises and affections differ from the other in their tendency to destroy Satan's interest. 1. In the person himself, in their tendency to cause the soul to hate every evil and false way, and to produce universal holiness of heart and life, disposing him to make the service of God, and the promoting of his glory and the good of mankind, the very business of his life; whereas those false discoveries and affections have not this effect. There may, indeed, be great zeal, and a great deal of what is called religion; but it is not a truly Christian zeal....it is not a being zealous of good works; their religion is not the service of God....it is not a seeking and serving God, but, indeed, a seeking and serving themselves.....Though there may be a change of life, it is not a change from every wicked way to a uniform Christian life and practice, but only a turning the stream of corruption from one channel to another. Thus the Apostle James distinguishes, in our context, a true faith from the faith of devils; James ii. 19, 20...." Thou believest that there is one God; the devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" And thus the Apostle John distinguishes true communion with God;

1 John i. 6, 7. "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin." By this he distinguishes true spiritual knowledge, chap. ii. 3, 4. "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." And hereby the same apostle distinguishes true love, chap. iii. 18, 19. "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed [in work, as the word signifies] and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him."

2. Truly gracious experiences have a tendency to destroy Satan's interest in the world.

False religion, consisting in the counterfeits of the operation of the Spirit of God, and in high pretences and great appearances of inward experimental religion: When this prevails among a people, though, for the present, it may surprise many, and may be the occasion of alarming and awakening some sinners, yet in the final issue of things, tends greatly to wound and weaken the cause of vital religion, and to strengthen the interest of Satan, desperately to harden the hearts of sinners, exceedingly to fill the world with prejudice against the power of godliness, to promote infidelity and licentious principles and practices, to build up and make strong the devil's kingdom in the world, more than open vice and profaneness, or professed Atheism, or public persecution, and perhaps more than any thing else whatsoever.

But it is not so with true religion in its genuine beauty. That, if it prevails in great power, will doubtless excite the rage of the devil, and many other enemies of religion:.... However, it gives great advantage to its friends, and exceedingly strengthens their cause, and tends to convince or confound enemies. True religion is a divine light in the souls of the saints; and, as it shines out in the conversation before men, it tends to induce others to glorify God. There is nothing like it (as to means) to awaken the consciences of men, to

convince infidels, and to stop the mouths of gainsayers. Though men naturally hate the power of godliness, yet when they see the fruits of it, there is a witness in their consciences in its favor. "He that serveth Christ in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, is acceptable to God, and approved of men," Rom. xiv. 17, 18. The prevailing of true religion ever tends to the honor of religion in the world, though it commonly is the occasion of great persecution. It is a sure thing; the more it appears and is exemplified in the view of the world, the more will its honor, and the honor of its author, be advanced. Phil. i. 11. "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."

The third use may be of exhortation, to seek those distinguishing qualifications and affections of soul which neither the devil, nor any unholy being, has or can have.

How excellent is that inward virtue and religion which consists in those! Herein consists the most excellent experiences of saints and angels in heaven. Herein consists the best experience of the man Christ Jesus, whether in his humbled or glorified state. Herein consists the image of God; yea, this is spoken of in Scripture, as a communication of something of God's own beauty and excellency.... A participation of the divine nature, 2 Peter i. 4. A partaking of his holiness, Heb. xii. 10. A partaking of Christ's fulness, John i 16. Hereby the saints are filled with all the fulness of God, Eph. iii. 18, 19.....Hereby they have fellowship with both the Father and the Son, 1 John i. 3; that is, they communicate with them in their happiness. Yea, by means of this divine virtue, there is a mutual indwelling of God and the saints; 1 John iv. 16. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."

This qualification must render the person that has it excellent and happy indeed, and doubtless is the highest dignity and blessedness of any creature. This is the peculiar gift of God, which he bestows only on his special favorites. As to silver, gold, and diamonds, earthly crowns and kingdoms, he

often throws them out to those that he esteems as dogs and swine ; but this is the peculiar blessing of his dear children. This is what flesh and blood cannot impart, and what all the devils in hell cannot work the least degree of, in any heart ; it is God alone can bestow it. This was the special benefit which Christ died to procure for his elect, the most excellent token of his everlasting love ; the chief fruit of his great labors, and the most precious purchase of his blood.

By this, above all other things, do men glorify God. By this, above all other things, do the saints shine as lights in the world, and are blessings to mankind. And this, above all things, tends to their own comfort; from hence arises that "peace which passeth all understanding," and that "joy which is unspeakable, and full of glory." And this is that which will most certainly issue in the eternal salvation of those that have it. It is impossible that the soul wherein it is should sink and perish. It is an immortal seed....it is eternal life begun ; and therefore they that have it can never die. It is the dawning of the light of glory....it is the daystar risen in the heart, that is a sure forerunner of that sun's rising which will bring on an everlasting day. This is that water which Christ gives, which is in him that drinks it "a well of water springing up into everlasting life ;" John iv. 14. It is something from heaven, is of a heavenly nature, and tends to heaven. And those that have it, however they may now wander in a wilderness, or be tossed to and fro on a tempestuous ocean, shall certainly arrive in heaven at last, where this heavenly spark shall be increased and perfected, and the souls of the saints all be transformed into a bright and pure flame, and they shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. AMEN.

SERMON VI.

The Excellency of Christ.

REVELATIONS V. 5, 6.

AND ONE OF THE ELDERS SAITH UNTO ME, WEEP NOT: BEHOLD THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH, THE ROOT OF DAVID, HATH PREVAILED TO OPEN THE BOOK, AND TO LOOSE THE SEVEN SEALS THEREOF. AND I BEHELD, AND LO, IN THE MIDST OF THE THRONE, AND OF THE FOUR BEASTS, AND IN THE MIDST OF THE ELDERS, STOOD A LAMB AS IT HAD BEEN SLAIN.....

THE visions and revelations that the Apostle John had of the future events of God's providence are here introduced with a vision of the book of God's decrees, by which those events were foreordained; which is represented in the 1st verse of this chapter, as a book in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, "written within and on the back side, and sealed with seven seals." Books in the form in which they were wont of old to be made, were broad leaves of parchment or paper, or something of that nature, joined together at one edge, and so rolled up together, and then sealed, or some way fastened together, to prevent their unfolding and opening. Hence we read of the roll of a book, Jer. xxxvi. 2. It seems to have been such a book that John had the vision of here; and therefore it is said to be "written within and on the back side," i. e. on the inside pages, and also on one of the outside pages, viz. that that was rolled in, in the rolling of the book up together. And it is said to be "sealed with seven seals," to signify that what was written in it was perfectly hidden and

secret; or that God's decrees of future events are sealed, and shut up from all possibility of being discovered by creatures, till God is pleased to make them known. We find that seven is often used in scripture as the number of perfection, to signify the superlative or most perfect degree of any thing; which probably came from that, that on the seventh day God beheld the works of the creation finished, and rested and rejoiced in them, as being complete and perfect.

When John saw this book, he tells us, he "saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon." And that he wept much, because "no man was found worthy to open the book, neither to look thereon." And then he tells us how his tears were dried up, viz. that "one of the elders said unto him, Weep not; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed," &c. as in the text. Though no man nor angel, nor any mere creature, was found either able to loose the seals, or worthy to be admitted to the privilege of reading the book; yet this was declared, for the comfort of this beloved disciple, that Christ was found both able and worthy. And we have an account in the succeeding chapters how he actually did it, opening the seals in order, first one, and then another, revealing what God had decreed should come to pass hereafter. And we have an account in this chapter, of his coming and taking the book out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne, and of the joyful praises that were sung to him in heaven and earth on that occasion.

Many things might be observed in the words of the text; but it is to my present purpose only to take notice of the two distinct appellations here given to Christ.

1. He is called a *Lion*. *Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah.* He seems to be called the Lion of the tribe of Judah, in allusion to what Jacob said in his blessing of the tribes on his death bed; who, when he came to bless Judah, compares him to a lion, Gen. xlix. 9. "Judah is a lion's whelp; from the

prey, my son, thou art gone up: He stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?" And also to the standard of the camp of Judah in the wilderness, on which was displayed a lion, according to the ancient tradition of the Jews. It is much on account of the valiant acts of David, that the tribe of Judah, of which David was, is in Jacob's prophetical blessing compared to a lion; but more especially with an eye to Jesus Christ, who also was of that tribe, and was descended of David, and is in our text called "the root of David;" and therefore Christ is here called "the lion of the tribe of Judah."

2. He is called a *Lamb*. John was told of a lion that had prevailed to open the book, and probably expected to see a lion in his vision; but while he is expecting, behold a Lamb appears to open the book, an exceeding diverse kind of creature from a lion. A lion is a devourer, one that is wont to make terrible slaughter of others; and no creature more easily falls a prey to him than a lamb. And Christ is here represented not only as a lamb, a creature very liable to be slain, but a "Lamb as he had been slain," that is, with the marks of its deadly wounds appearing on it.

That which I would observe from the words, for the subject of my present discourse, is this, viz.

"There is an admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies in Jesus Christ.

The lion and the lamb, though very diverse kinds of creatures, yet have each their peculiar excellencies. The lion excels in strength, and in the majesty of his voice: The lamb excels in meekness and patience, besides the excellent nature of the creature as good for food, and yielding that which is fit for our cloathing, and being suitable to be offered in sacrifice to God. But we see that Christ is in the text compared to both; because the diverse excellencies of both wonderfully meet in him.

In handling this subject, I would,

First, Shew wherein there is an admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies in Christ.

Secondly, How this admirable conjunction of excellencies appears in Christ's acts.

And then make application.

First, I would shew wherein there is an admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies in Jesus Christ. Which appears in three things.

I. There is a conjunction of such excellencies in Christ, as, in our manner of conceiving, are very diverse one from another.

II. There is in him a conjunction of such really diverse excellencies, as otherwise would have seemed to us utterly incompatible in the same subject.

III. Such diverse excellencies are exercised in him towards men, that otherwise would have seemed impossible to be exercised towards the same object.

I. There is a conjunction of such excellencies in Christ, as, in our manner of conceiving, are very diverse one from another. Such are the various divine perfections and excellencies that Christ is possessed of. Christ is a divine person, or one that is God; and therefore has all the attributes of God. The difference there is, between these, is chiefly relative, and in our manner of conceiving of them. And those that in this sense are most diverse, do meet in the person of Christ.

I shall mention two instances.

1. There do meet in Jesus Christ infinite highness and infinite condescension. Christ, as he is God, is infinitely great and high above all. He is higher than the kings of the earth: For he is King of kings and Lord of lords. He is higher than the heavens, and higher than the highest angels of heaven. So great is he, that all men, all kings and princes, are as worms of the dust before him; all nations are as the drop of the bucket, and the light dust of the balance; yea, and angels themselves are as nothing before him. He is so high, that he is infinitely above any need of us; above our reach, that we cannot be profitable to him; and above our conceptions, that we cannot comprehend him. Prov. xxx. 4. "What is his name, or what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?" Our under-

standings, if we stretch them never so far, cannot reach up to his divine glory. Job xi. 8. "It is high as heaven, what canst thou do?" Christ is the Creator and great possessor of heaven and earth: He is sovereign Lord of all: He rules over the whole universe and doth whatsoever pleaseth him: His knowledge is without bound: His wisdom is perfect, and what none can circumvent: His power is infinite, and none can resist him: His riches are immense and inexhaustible: His majesty is infinitely awful.

And yet he is one of infinite condescension. None are so low or inferior, but Christ's condescension is sufficient to take a gracious notice of them. He condescends not only to the angels, humbling himself to behold the things that are done in heaven, but he also condescends to such poor creatures as men; and that not only so as to take notice of princes and great men, but of those that are of meanest rank and degree, the "poor of the world." James ii. 5. Such as are commonly despised by their fellow creatures, Christ does not despise. 1 Cor. i. 28. "Base things of the world, and things that are despised, hath God chosen." Christ condescends to take notice of beggars, Luke xvi. 22, and of servants, and people of the most despised nations: In Christ Jesus is neither "Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free." Col. iii. 11. He that is thus high, condescends to take a gracious notice of little children, Matth. xix. 14. "Suffer little children to come unto me." Yea, which is much more, his condescension is sufficient to take a gracious notice of the most unworthy, sinful creatures, those that have infinite ill deservings.

Yea, so great is his condescension, that it is not only sufficient to take some gracious notice of such as these, but sufficient for every thing that is an act of condescension. His condescension is great enough to become their friend: It is great enough to become their companion, to unite their souls to him in spiritual marriage: It is great enough to take their nature upon him, to become one of them, that he may be one with them: Yea, it is great enough to abase himself yet lower for them, even to expose himself to shame and spitting; yea,

to yield up himself to an ignominious death for them. And what act of condescension can be conceived of greater? Yet such an act as this, has his condescension yielded to, for those that are so low and mean, despicable and unworthy!

Such a conjunction of such infinite highness and low condescension, in the same person, is admirable. We see, by manifold instances, what a tendency a high station has in men, to make them to be of a quite contrary disposition. If one worm be a little exalted above another, by having more dust, or a bigger dunghill, how much does he make of himself! What a distance does he keep from those that are below him! And a little condescension is what he expects should be made much of, and greatly acknowledged. Christ condescends to wash our feet; but how would great men, (or rather the bigger worms) account themselves debased by acts of far less condescension.

2. There meet in Jesus Christ, infinite justice and infinite grace. As Christ is a divine person, he is infinitely holy and just, infinitely hating sin, and disposed to execute condign punishment for sin. He is the Judge of the world, and is the infinitely just judge of it, and will not at all acquit the wicked, or by any means clear the guilty

And yet he is one that is infinitely gracious and merciful. Though his justice be so strict with respect to all sin, and every breach of the law, yet he has grace sufficient for every sinner, and even the chief of sinners. And it is not only sufficient for the most unworthy to show them mercy, and bestow some good upon them, but to bestow the greatest good; yea, it is sufficient to bestow all good upon them, and to do all things for them. There is no benefit or blessing that they can receive so great, but the grace of Christ is sufficient to bestow it on the greatest sinner that ever lived. And not only so, but so great is his grace, that nothing is too much as the means of this good: It is sufficient not only to do great things, but also to suffer in order to it; and not only to suffer, but to suffer most extremely even unto death, the most terrible of natural evils; and not only death, but the most ignominious and

tormenting, and every way the most terrible death that men could inflict; yea, and greater sufferings than men could inflict, who could only torment the body, but also those sufferings in his soul, that were the more immediate fruits of the wrath of God against the sins of those he undertakes for.

II. There do meet in the person of Christ such really diverse excellencies, which otherwise would have been thought utterly incompatible in the same subject; such as are conjoined in no other person whatever, either divine, human, or angelical; and such as neither men nor angels would ever have imagined could have met together in the same person, had it not been seen in the person of Christ. I would give some instances.

1. In the person of Christ do meet together infinite glory, and the lowest humility. Infinite glory and the virtue of humility, meet in no other person but Christ. They meet in no created person; for no created person has infinite glory: And they meet in no other divine person but Christ. For though the divine nature be infinitely abhorrent to pride, yet humility is not properly predicable of God the Father, and the Holy Ghost, that exist only in the divine nature; because it is a proper excellency only of a created nature; for it consists radically in a sense of a comparative lowness and littleness before God, or the great distance between God and the subject of this virtue; but it would be a contradiction to suppose any such thing in God.

But in Jesus Christ, who is both God and man, these two diverse excellencies are sweetly united. He is a person infinitely exalted in glory and dignity. Phil. ii. 6. "Being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God." There is equal honor due to him with the Father. John v. 25. "That all men should honor the son, even as they honor the Father." God himself says so to him, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." Heb. i. 8. And there is the same supreme respect and divine worship paid to him by the angels of heaven, as to God the Father; as there, verse 6. "Let all the angels of God worship him."

But however he is thus above all, yet he is lowest of all in humility. There never was so great an instance of this virtue among either men or angels, as Jesus. None ever was so sensible of the distance between God and him, or had a heart so lowly before God, as the man Christ Jesus, Matth. xi. 29. What a wonderful spirit of humility appeared in him, when he was here upon earth in all his behavior! In his contentment, in his mean outward condition, contentedly living in the family of Joseph the carpenter, and Mary his mother, for thirty years together, and afterwards choosing outward meanness, poverty and contempt, rather than earthly greatness; in his washing his disciples' feet, and in all his speeches and deportment towards them; in his cheerfully sustaining the form of a servant through his whole life, and submitting to such immense humiliation at death!

2. In the person of Christ do meet together infinite majesty and transcendent meekness. These again are two qualifications that meet together in no other person but Christ. Meekness, properly so called, is a virtue proper only to the creature: We scarcely ever find meekness mentioned as a divine attribute in scripture; at least not in the New Testament; for thereby seems to be signified, a calmness and quietness of spirit, arising from humility in mutable beings that are naturally liable to be put into a ruffle by the assaults of a tempestuous and injurious world. But Christ being both God and man, hath both infinite majesty and superlative meekness.

Christ was a person of infinite majesty. It is he that is spoken of, Psalm xlv. 3. "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty." It is he that is mighty, that rideth on the heavens, and in his excellency on the sky. It is he that is terrible out of his holy places; who is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea; before whom a fire goeth, and burneth up his enemies round about; at whose presence the earth doth quake, and the hills do melt; who sitteth on the circle of the earth, and all the inhabitants thereof are as grass-

hoppers; who rebukes the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up the rivers; whose eyes are as a flame of fire, from whose presence, and from the glory of whose power, the wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction; who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, that hath heaven for his throne and the earth for his footstool, and is the high and lofty One, who inhabits eternity, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and of whose dominion there is no end.

And yet he was the most marvellous instance of meekness, and humble quietness of spirit, that ever was; agreeable to the prophecies of him. Matth. xxi 4, 5. "All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." And, agreeable to what Christ declares of himself, Matth. xi. 29. "I am meek and lowly in heart." And agreeable to what was manifest in his behavior here in this world: For there was never such an instance seen on earth, of a meek behavior, under injuries and reproaches, and towards enemies; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; who was of a wonderful spirit of forgiveness, was ready to forgive his worst enemies, and prayed for them with fervent and effectual prayers. With what meekness did he appear when in the ring of soldiers that were contemning and mocking him, when he was silent and opened not his mouth, but went as a lamb to the slaughter. Thus is Christ a lion in majesty, and a lamb in meekness.

3. These meet in the person of Christ; the deepest reverence towards God, and equality with God. Christ, when he was here on earth, appeared full of holy reverence towards the Father: He paid the most reverential worship to him, praying to him with postures of reverence. Thus we read of his "kneeling down and praying." Luke xxii. 41. This became Christ, as he was one that had taken on him the human nature; but at the same time he existed in the divine nature; whereby his person was in all respects equal to the

person of the Father. God the Father hath no attributs or perfection that the Son hath not, in equal degree, and equal glory. These things meet in no other person but Jesus Christ.

4. There are conjoined in the person of Christ infinite worthiness of good, and the greatest patience under sufferings of evil. He was perfectly innocent, and deserved no suffering. He deserved nothing from God by any guilt of his own; and he deserved no ill from men. Yea, he was not only harmless and undeserving of suffering, but he was infinitely worthy, worthy of the infinite love of the Father, worthy of infinite and eternal happiness, and infinitely worthy of all possible esteem, love, and service from all men. And yet he was perfectly patient under the greatest sufferings that ever were endured in this world. Heb. xii. 2. "He endured the cross, despising the shame." He suffered not from his Father for his faults, but ours; and he suffered from men not for his faults, but for those things on account of which he was infinitely worthy of their love and honor; which made his patience the more wonderful and the more glorious. 1 Pet. ii. 20, &c. "For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently; this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously, who, his ownself, bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed." There is no such conjunction of innocence, worthiness and patience under sufferings, as in the person of Christ.

5. In the person of Christ are conjoined an exceeding spirit of obedience, with supreme dominion over heaven and earth. Christ is the Lord of all things in two respects: He is so, as he is Godman and mediator; and so his dominion is

appointed, and given of the Father, and is by delegation from God, and he is as it were, the Father's vicegerent. But he is Lord of all things in another respect, viz. as he is (by his original nature) God; and so he is by natural right the Lord of all, and Supreme over all as much as the Father. Thus, he has dominion over the world, not by delegation, but in his own right: He is not an under God, as the Arians suppose, but, to all intents and purposes, Supreme God.

And yet in the same person is found the greatest spirit of obedience to the commands and law of God that ever was in the universe; which was manifest in his obedience here in this world. John xiv. 31, "As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." John xv. 10. "Even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." The greatness of his spirit of obedience appears in the perfection of his obedience, and in his obeying commands of such exceeding difficulty. Never any one received commands from God of such difficulty, and that were so great a trial of obedience, as Jesus Christ. One of God's commands to him was, that he should yield himself to those dreadful sufferings that he underwent. See John x. 18. "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself."...."This commandment received I of my Father." And Christ was thoroughly obedient to this command of God. Heb. vi. 8. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered." Philip. ii. 8. "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Never was there such an instance of obedience in man nor angel as this, though he that obeyed was at the same time Supreme Lord of both angels and men.

6. In the person of Christ are conjoined absolute sovereignty and perfect resignation. This is another unparalleled conjunction. Christ, as he is God, is the absolute sovereign of the world; he is the sovereign disposer of events. The decrees of God are all his sovereign decrees; and the work of creation, and all God's works of providence, are his sovereign works. It is he that worketh all things according to the coun-

eel of his own will. Col. i. 16, 17. "By him, and through him, and to him, are all things." John v. 17. "The Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Matth. viii. 3. "I will, be thou clean."

But yet Christ was the most wonderful instance of resignation that ever appeared in the world. He was absolutely and perfectly resigned when he had a near and immediate prospect of his terrible sufferings, and the dreadful cup that he was to drink, the idea and expectation of which made his soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and put him into such an agony that his sweat was as it were great drops or clots of blood, falling down to the ground; but in such circumstances he was wholly resigned to the will of God. Matth. xxvi. 39. "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Ver. 42. "O my father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

7. In Christ do meet together selfsufficiency, and an entire trust and reliance on God; which is another conjunction peculiar to the person of Christ. As he is a divine person, he is self sufficient, standing in need of nothing: All creatures are dependent on him, but he is dependent on none, but is absolutely independent. His proceeding from the Father, in his eternal generation of filiation argues no proper dependence on the will of the Father; for that proceeding was natural and necessary, and not arbitrary. But yet Christ entirely trusted in God: His enemies say that of him, "He trusted in God that he would deliver him," Matth. xxvii. 43. And the apostle testifies, 1 Pet. ii. 23. "That he committed himself to God."

III. Such diverse excellencies are expressed in him towards men, that otherwise would have seemed impossible to be exercised towards the same object; as particularly these three, justice, mercy, and truth. The same that are mentioned Psalm lxxxv. 10. "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other." The strict justice of God, and even his revenging justice, and that

against the sins of men, never was so gloriously manifested as in Christ. He manifested an infinite regard to the attribute of God's justice, in that, when he had a mind to save sinners, he was willing to undergo such extreme sufferings, rather than that their salvation should be to the injury of the honor of that attribute. And as he is the judge of the world, he doth himself exercise strict justice; he will not clear the guilty, nor at all acquit the wicked in judgment. And yet how wonderfully is infinite mercy towards sinners displayed in him! And what glorious and ineffable grace and love have been, and are exercised by him, towards sinful men! Though he be the just judge of a sinful world, yet he is also the Saviour of the world: Though he be a consuming fire to sin, yet he is the light and life of sinners. Rom. iii. 25, 26. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

So the immutable truth of God, in the threatenings of his law against the sins of men, was never so manifested as it is in Jesus Christ; for there never was any other so great a trial of the unalterableness of the truth of God in those threatenings, as when sin came to be imputed to his own Son. And then in Christ has been seen already an actual complete accomplishment of those threatenings which never has been, nor will be seen in any other instance; because the eternity that will be taken up in fulfilling those threatenings on others, never will be finished. Christ manifested an infinite regard to this truth of God in his sufferings. And, in his judging the world, he makes the covenant of works, that contains those dreadful threatenings, his rule of judgment; he will see to it, that it is not infringed in the least jot or tittle; he will do nothing contrary to the threatenings of the law, and their complete fulfilment. And yet in him we have many great and precious promises, promises of perfect deliverance from the penalty of the law. And this is the promise that he hath

promised us, even eternal life. And in him are all the promises of God, Yea, and Amen.

Having thus shown wherein there is an admirable conjunction of excellencies in Jesus Christ, I now proceed,

Secondly, To shew how this admirable conjunction of excellencies appears in Christ's acts.

I. It appears in what Christ did in taking on him our nature. In this act his infinite condescension wonderfully appeared, that he that was God should become man; that the Word should be made flesh, and should take on him a nature infinitely below his original nature! And it appears yet more remarkably in the low circumstances of his incarnation. He was conceived in the womb of a poor young woman, whose poverty appeared in that, when she came to offer sacrifices for her purification, she brought what was allowed of in the law only in case of poverty; as Luke ii. 24: "According to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." This was allowed only in case the person was so poor that she was not able to offer a lamb. Levit. xii. 8.

And though his infinite condescension thus appeared in the manner of his incarnation, yet his divine dignity also appeared in it; for though he was conceived in the womb of a poor virgin, yet he was there conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost. And his divine dignity also appeared in the holiness of his conception and birth. Though he was conceived in the womb of one of the corrupt race of mankind, yet he was conceived and born without sin; as the angel said to the blessed Virgin, Luke i. 35. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God."

His infinite condescension marvellously appeared in the manner of his birth. He was brought forth in a stable, because there was no room for them in the inn. The inn was taken up by others, that were looked upon as persons of greater account. The blessed Virgin, being poor and despised,

was turned or shut out. Though she was in such necessitous circumstances, yet those that counted themselves her betters would not give place to her; and therefore, in the time of her travail, she was forced to betake herself to a stable; and when the child was born, it was wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger; and there Christ lay a little infant; and there he eminently appeared as a lamb. But yet this feeble infant, that was born thus in a stable, and laid in a manger, was born to conquer and triumph over Satan, that roaring lion. He came to subdue the mighty powers of darkness, and make a shew of them openly; and so to restore peace on earth, and to manifest God's good will towards men, and to bring glory to God in the highest; according as the end of his birth was declared by the joyful songs of the glorious hosts of angels, appearing to the shepherds at the same time that the infant lay in the manger; whereby his divine dignity was manifested.

II. This admirable conjunction of excellencies appears in the acts and various passages of Christ's life. Though Christ dwelt on the earth in mean outward circumstances, whereby his condescension and humility especially appeared, and his majesty was veiled; yet his divine dignity and glory did, in many of his acts, shine through the veil, and it illustriously appeared, that he was not only the Son of man, but the great God.

Thus in the circumstances of his infancy, his outward meanness appeared; yet there was something then to shew forth his divine dignity, in the wise men's being stirred up to come from the east to give honor to him, their being led by a miraculous star, and coming and falling down and worshipping him, and presenting him with gold, frankincense, and myrrh. His humility and meekness wonderfully appeared in his subjection to his mother and reputed father when he was a child: He therein appeared as a lamb. But his divine glory broke forth and shone, when, at twelve years old, he disputed with the doctors in the temple. In that he appeared, in some measure, as *the Lion of the Tribe of Judah*.

And so, after he entered on his public ministry, his marvellous humility and meekness was manifested, in his choosing to

appear in such mean outward circumstances, and in being so contented in them, when he was so poor that he had not where to lay his head, and depended on the charity of some of his followers for his subsistence; as appears by Luke viii. at the beginning; as also in his meek, condescending, and familiar treatment of his disciples; in his discourses with them, treating them as a father his children; yea, as friends and companions; and in his patient bearing such affliction and reproach, and so many injuries from the Scribes and Pharisees, and others: In these things he appeared as a lamb. And yet he at the same time did many ways shew forth his divine majesty and glory, particularly in the miracles that he wrought, which were evidently divine works, and manifested omnipotent power, and so declared him to be *the Lion of the tribe of Judah*. His wonderful and miraculous works plainly shewed him to be the God of nature; in that it appeared by them that he had all nature in his hands, and could lay an arrest upon it, and stop, and change its course as he pleased. In healing the sick, and opening the eyes of the blind, and unstopping the ears of the deaf, and healing the lame; he shewed that he was the God that framed the eye, and created the ear, and was the author of the frame of man's body. By the dead's rising at his command, it appeared that he was the author and fountain of life, and that "God the Lord, to whom belong the issues from death." By his walking on the sea in a storm, when the waves were raised, he shewed himself to be that God spoken of, Job ix. 8. "That treadeth on the waves of the sea." By his stilling the storm, and calming the rage of the sea, by his powerful command, saying, "Peace, be still," he shewed himself to be he that has the command of the universe, and to be that God that brings things to pass by the word of his power, that speaks and it is done, that commands and it stands fast; and he that is spoken of, Psalm lxv. 7. "Who stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves." And Psalm cvii. 29. "That maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still." And Psalm lxxxix. 8. 9, "O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee, or to thy faith-

fulness round about thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea; when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them." Christ, by casting out devils, remarkably appeared as *the Lion of the tribe of Judah*, and showed that he was stronger than that roaring lion, that seeks whom he may devour. He commanded them to come out, and they were forced to obey. They were terribly afraid of him; they fall down before him, and beseech him not to torment them: He forces a whole legion of them to forsake their old hold, by his powerful word; and they could not so much as enter into the swine without his leave. He shewed the glory of his omniscience, by telling the thoughts of men; as we have often an account. Herein he appeared to be that God spoken of, Amos iv. 13. "That declareth unto man what is his thought." Thus, in the midst of his meanness and humiliation, his divine glory appeared in his miracles, John ii. 11. "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory."

And though Christ ordinarily appeared without outward glory, and in great obscurity, yet at a certain time he threw off the veil, and appeared in his divine majesty, so far as it could be outwardly manifested to men in this frail state, when he was transfigured in the mount. The Apostle Peter speaks of it, 2 Pet. i. 16, 17. Speaking there of himself, as one that was an "eye witness of his majesty, when he received from God the Father, honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; which voice that came from heaven they heard, when they were with him in the holy mount."

And at the same time that Christ was wont to appear in such meekness, condescension, and humility, in his familiar discourses with his disciples, appearing therein as the Lamb of God; he was also wont to appear as the *Lion of the Tribe of Judah*, with divine authority and majesty, in his so sharply rebuking the Scribes and Pharisees, and other hypocrites.

III. This admirable conjunction of excellencies remarkably appears in his offering up himself a sacrifice for sinners in

his last sufferings. As this was the greatest thing in all the work of redemption, the greatest act of Christ in that work; so in this act especially does there appear that admirable conjunction of excellencies that has been spoken of. Christ never so much appeared as a lamb, as when he was slain: "He came like a lamb to the slaughter," Isaiah liii. 7. Then he was offered up to God as a lamb without blemish, and without spot: Then especially did he appear to be the antitype of the lamb of the passover: 1 Cor. v. 7. "Christ our passover sacrificed for us." And yet in that act he did in an especial manner appear as *the Lion of the tribe of Judah*; yea, in this above all other acts, in many respects, as may appear in the following things.

1. Then was Christ in the greatest degree of his humiliation, and yet by that, above all other things, his divine glory appears. Christ's humiliation was great, in being born in such a low condition, of a poor virgin, and in a stable: His humiliation was great, in being subject to Joseph the carpenter, and Mary his mother, and afterwards living in poverty, so as not to have where to lay his head, and in suffering such manifold and bitter reproaches as he suffered, while he went about preaching and working miracles; but his humiliation was never so great as it was in his last sufferings, beginning with his agony in the garden, until he expired on the cross. Never was he subject to such ignominy as then; never did he suffer so much pain in his body, or so much sorrow in his soul; never was he in so great an exercise of his condescension, humility, meekness, and patience, as he was in these last sufferings; never was his divine glory and majesty covered with so thick and dark a veil; never did he so empty himself, and make himself of no reputation, as at this time; and yet never was his divine glory so manifested by any act of his, as in that act, of yielding himself up to these sufferings. When the fruit of it came to appear, and the mystery and ends of it to be unfolded in the issue of it, then did the glory of it appear; then did it appear as the most glorious act of Christ that ever he exercised towards the creature. This act of his is celebrat-

ed by the angels and hosts of heaven with peculiar praises, as that which is above all others glorious, as you may see in the context, verse 9, &c. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God, kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

2. He never in any act gave so great a manifestation of love to God, and yet never so manifested his love to those that were enemies to God, as in that act. Christ never did any thing whereby his love to the Father was so eminently manifested, as in his laying down his life, under such inexpressible sufferings, in obedience to his command, and for the vindication of the honor of his authority and majesty; nor did ever any mere creature give such a testimony of love to God as that was; and yet this was the greatest expression of all of his love to sinful men, that were enemies to God; Rom. v. 10. "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son." The greatness of Christ's love to such appears in nothing so much as in its being dying love. That blood of Christ that was sweat out, and fell in great drops to the ground, in his agony, was shed from love to God's enemies and his own. That shame and spitting, that torment of body, and that exceeding sorrow, even unto death, that he endured in his soul, was what he underwent from love to rebels against God, to save them from hell, and to purchase for them eternal glory. Never did Christ so eminently shew his regard to God's honor, as in offering up himself a victim to revenging justice, to vindicate God's honor: And yet in this above all, he manifested his love to them that

dishonored God, so as to bring such guilt on themselves, that nothing less than his blood could atone for it.

3. Christ never so eminently appeared for divine justice, and yet never suffered so much from divine justice, as when he offered up himself a sacrifice for our sins. In Christ's great sufferings, did his infinite regard to the honor of God's justice distinguishingly appear; for it was from regard to that, that he thus humbled himself: And yet in these sufferings, Christ was the mark of the vindictive expressions of that very justice of God. Revenging justice then spent all its force upon him, on the account of our guilt that was laid upon him; he was not spared at all; but God spent the arrows of his vengeance upon him, which made him sweat blood, and cry out upon the cross, and probably rent his vitals, broke his heart, the fountain of blood, or some other internal blood vessels, and by the violent fermentation turned his blood to water: For the blood and water that issued out of his side, when pierced by the spear, seems to have been extravasated blood; and so there might be a kind of literal fulfilment of that in Psalm xxii. 14. "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: My heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels." And this was the way and means by which Christ stood up for the honor of God's justice, viz. by thus suffering its terrible executions. For when he had undertaken for sinners, and had substituted himself in their room, divine justice could have its due honor no other way than by his suffering its revenges.

In this the diverse excellencies that meet in the person of Christ appeared, viz. his infinite regard to God's justice, and such love to those that have exposed themselves to it, as induced him thus to yield himself a sacrifice to it.

4. Christ's holiness never so illustriously shone forth as it did in its last sufferings; and yet he never was to such a degree treated as guilty. Christ's holiness never had such a trial as it had then; and therefore never had so great a manifestation. When it was tried in this furnace, it came forth as gold, or as silver purified seven times. His holiness then

above all appeared in his steadfast pursuit of the honor of God, and in his obedience to him; for his yielding himself unto death was transcendently the greatest act of obedience that ever was paid to God by any one since the foundation of the world.

And yet then Christ was in the greatest degree treated as a wicked person. He was apprehended and bound as a malefactor. His accusers represented him as a most wicked wretch. In his sufferings before his crucifixion, he was treated as if he had been the worst and vilest of mankind; and then he was put to a kind of death, that none but the worst sort of malefactors were wont to suffer, those that were most abject in their persons, and guilty of the blackest crimes. And he suffered as though guilty from God himself, by reason of our guilt imputed to him; for he was made sin for us, who knew no sin; he was made subject to wrath, as if he had been sinful himself: He was made a curse for us.

Christ never so greatly manifested his hatred of sin, as against God, as in his dying to take away the dishonor that sin had done to God; and yet never was he to such a degree subject to the terrible effects of God's hatred to sin, and wrath against it, as he was then. In this appears those diverse excellencies meeting in Christ, viz. love to God, and grace to sinners.

5. He never was so dealt with as unworthy as in his last sufferings, and yet it is chiefly on account of them that he is accounted worthy. He was therein dealt with as if he had not been worthy to live: They cry out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him." John xiv. 15. And they prefer Barabbas before him. And he suffered from the Father, as one whose demerits were infinite, by reason of our demerits that were laid upon him. And yet it was especially by that act of his, subjecting himself to those sufferings, that he merited, and on the account of which chiefly he was accounted worthy of the glory of his exaltation, Philip. ii. 8, 9. "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto the death; wherefore God hath highly exalted him." And we

see that it is on this account chiefly that he is extolled as worthy by saints and angels in the context; "worthy," say they, "is the lamb that was slain." This shews an admirable conjunction in him of infinite dignity, and infinite condescension and love to the infinitely unworthy.

6. Christ in his last sufferings suffered most extremely from those that he was then in his greatest act of love to. He never suffered so much from his Father, (though not from any hatred to him, but from hatred to our sins) for he then forsook him, (as Christ on the cross expresses it) or took away the comforts of his presence; and then "it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief," as Isaiah liii. 10. And yet never gave so great a manifestation of love to God as then, as has been already observed. So Christ never suffered so much from the hands of men as he did then; yet never was so high an exercise of love to men. He never was so *ill* treated by his disciples; who were so unconcerned about his sufferings, that they would not watch with him one hour, in his agony; and when he was apprehended, all forsook him and fled, except Peter, who denied him with oaths and curses. And yet then he was suffering, shedding his blood, and pouring out his soul unto death for them. Yea, he probably was then shedding his blood for some of them that shed his blood: He was dying for some that killed him; whom he prayed for while they were crucifying him; and were probably afterwards brought home to Christ by Peter's preaching. Compare Luke xxiii. 34. Acts ii. 23, 36, 37, 41, and chapter iii. 17, and chapter iv. 4. This shews an admirable meeting of justice and grace in the redemption of Christ.

7. It was in Christ's last suffering, above all, that he was delivered up to the power of his enemies; and yet by these, above all, he obtained victory over his enemies. Christ never was so in his enemies' hands, as in the time of his last sufferings. They sought his life before; but from time to time they were restrained, and Christ escaped out of their hands; and this reason is given for it, that his time was not yet come; but now they were suffered to work their will upon him; he

was in a great degree delivered up to the malice and cruelty of both wicked men and devils; and therefore when Christ's enemies came to apprehend him, he says to them, Luke xxii. 53. "But when I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hand against me; but this is your hour and the power of darkness."

And yet it was principally by means of those sufferings that he conquered and overthrew his enemies. Christ never so effectually bruised Satan's head, as when he bruised his heel. The weapon with which Christ warred against the devil, and obtained a most complete victory and glorious triumph over him was the cross, the instrument and weapon with which he thought he had overthrown Christ, and brought on him shameful destruction. Col. ii. 14, 15. "Blotting out the hand writing of ordinances....nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." In his last sufferings, Christ sapped the very foundations of Satan's kingdom; he conquered his enemies in their own territories, and beat them with their own weapons; as David cut off Goliath's head with his own sword. The devil had, as it were, swallowed up Christ, as the whale did Jonah; but it was deadly poison to him; he gave him a mortal wound in his own bowels; he was soon sick of his morsel, and forced to vomit him up again; and is to this day heart sick of what he then swallowed as his prey. In those sufferings of Christ was laid the foundation of all that glorious victory that he has already obtained over Satan, in the overthrow of his heathenish kingdom in the Roman empire, and all the success the gospel has had since; and also of all his future and still more glorious victory that is to be obtained in all the earth. Thus Sampson's riddle is most eminently fulfilled, Judges xiv. 14. "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." And thus the true Sampson does more towards the destruction of his enemies at his death than in his life; in yielding up himself to death, he pulls down the temple of Dagon, and destroys many thousands of his enemies, even

while they are making themselves sport in his sufferings; and so he whose type was the ark, pulls down Dagon, and breaks off his head and hands in his own temple, even while he is brought in there as Dagon's captive.

Thus Christ appeared at the same time, and in the same act, as both a lion and a lamb. He appeared as a lamb in the hands of his cruel enemies; as a lamb in the paws, and between the devouring jaws, of a roaring lion; yea, he was a lamb actually slain by this lion; and yet at the same time, as *the Lion of the tribe of Judah*, he conquers and triumphs over Satan, destroying his own devourer; as Sampson did the lion that roared upon him, when he rent him as he would a kid. And in nothing has Christ appeared so much as a lion in glorious strength destroying his enemies, as when he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter. In his greatest weakness he was most strong; and when he suffered most from his enemies, he brought the greatest confusion on his enemies.

Thus this admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies was manifest in Christ, in his offering up himself to God in his last sufferings.

IV. It is still manifest in his acts, in his present state of exaltation in heaven. Indeed, in his exalted state, he most eminently appears in a manifestation of those excellencies, on the account of which he is compared to a lion; but still he appears as a lamb. Rev. xiv. 1. "And I looked, and *lo*, a Lamb stood on Mount Sion;" as in his state of humiliation he chiefly appeared as a lamb, and yet did not appear without manifestations of his divine majesty and power, as *the Lion of the tribe of Judah*. Though Christ be now at the right hand of God, exalted as King of heaven, and Lord of the universe; yet as he still is in the human nature, he still excels in humility. Though the man Christ Jesus be the highest of all creatures in heaven, yet he as much excels them all in humility, as he doth in glory and dignity; for none sees so much of the distance between God and him as he does. And though he now appears in such glorious majesty and dominion in heaven, yet he appears as a lamb in condescending, mild and sweet

ure atment of his saints there; for he is a Lamb still, even in the midst of the throne of his exaltation; and he that is the shepherd of the whole flock is himself a Lamb, and goes before them in heaven as such. Rev. vii. 17. "For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Though in heaven every knee bows to him, and though the angels fall down before him, adoring him, yet he treats his saints with infinite condescension, mildness and endearment. And, in his acts towards the saints on earth, he still appears as a Lamb, manifesting exceeding love and tenderness, in his intercession for them, as one that has had experience of affliction and temptation: He has not forgot what these things are; nor has he forgot how to pity those that are subject to them. And he still manifests his lamblike excellencies, in his dealings with his saints on earth, in admirable forbearance, love, gentleness and compassions, instructing, supplying, supporting and comforting them, often coming to them, and manifesting himself to them by his Spirit, that he may sup with them, and they with him, admitting them to sweet communion with him, enabling them with boldness and confidence to come to him and solace their hearts in him. And in heaven Christ still appears, as it were, with the marks of his wounds upon him; and so appears as a Lamb as it had been slain; as he was represented in vision to St. John, in the text, when he appeared to open the book sealed with seven seals, which is part of the glory of his exaltation.

V. And, *lastly*, This admirable conjunction of excellencies will be manifested in Christ's acts at the last judgment. He then, above all other times, will appear as *the Lion of the tribe of Judah* in infinite greatness and majesty, when he shall come in the glory of his Father, with all the holy angels, and the earth shall tremble before him, and the hills shall melt. This is he, spoken of Rev. xx. 11, that shall "sit on a great white throne, before whose face the earth and heaven shall flee away." He will then appear in the most dreadful and amaz-

ing manner to the wicked: The devils tremble at the thoughts of that appearance; and when it shall be, the kings and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, shall hide themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains, and shall cry to the mountains and rocks to fall on them and hide them from the face and wrath of the Lamb. And none can declare or conceive of the amazing manifestations of wrath in which he will then appear towards these; or the trembling and astonishment, the shrieking and gnashing of teeth, with which they shall stand before his judgment seat, and receive the terrible sentence of his wrath.

And yet he will at the same time appear as a Lamb to his saints: He will receive them as friends and brethren, treating them with infinite mildness and love: There shall be nothing in him terrible to them; but towards them he will clothe himself wholly with sweetness and endearment. The church shall then be admitted to him as his bride: That shall be her wedding day: The saints shall all be sweetly invited to come with him to inherit the kingdom, and reign in it with him to all eternity.

APPLICATION.

1. From this doctrine we may learn one reason why Christ is called by such a variety of names, and held forth under such a variety of representations in scripture. It is the better to signify and exhibit to us that variety of excellencies that meet together, and are conjoined in him. Many appellations are mentioned together in one verse, Isa. ix 6. "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." It shews a wonderful conjunction of excellencies, that the same person should be a Son, born and given, and yet be the everlasting Father, without begin-

ning or end; that he should be a Child, and yet be he whose name is Counsellor, and the mighty God; and well may his name, in whom such things are conjoined, be called Wonderful.

By reason of the same wonderful conjunction, Christ is represented by a great variety of sensible things, that are on some account excellent. Thus in some places he is called a Sun, as Mal. iv. 2, in others a Star, Numb. xxiv. 17. And he is especially represented by the Morning Star, as being that which excels all other stars in brightness, and is the forerunner of the day, Rev. xxii. 16. And, as in our text, he is compared to a lion in one verse, and a lamb in the next, so sometimes he is compared to a roe, or a young hart, another creature most diverse from a lion. So in some places he is called a rock, in others he is compared to a pearl: In some places he is called a man of war, and the Captain of our Salvation, in other places he is represented as a bridegroom. In the second chapter of Canticles, the 1st verse, he is compared to a rose and lily, that are sweet and beautiful flowers; in the next verse but one, he is compared to a tree, bearing sweet fruit. In Isai. liii. 2, he is called a Root out of a dry ground; but elsewhere, instead of that, he is called the Tree of Life, that grows (not in a dry or barren ground, but) "in the midst of the paradise of God." Rev. ii. 7.

II. Let the consideration of this wonderful meeting of diverse excellencies in Christ induce you to accept him, and close with him as your Saviour. As all manner of excellencies meet in him, so there are concurring in him all manner of arguments and motives, to move you to choose him for your Saviour, and every thing that tends to encourage poor sinners to come and put their trust in him. His fulness and all sufficiency as a Saviour gloriously appear in that variety of excellencies that has been spoken of.

Fallen man is in a state of exceeding great misery, and is helpless in it; he is a poor weak creature, like an infant, cast out in its blood, in the day that it is born: But Christ is *the Lion of the tribe of Judah;* he is strong, though we are weak; he

hath prevailed to do that for us which no creature else could do. Fallen man is a mean, despicable creature, a contemptible worm; but Christ who has undertaken for us, is infinitely honorable and worthy. Fallen man is polluted, but Christ is infinitely holy: Fallen man is hateful, but Christ is infinitely lovely: Fallen man is the object of God's indignation, but Christ is infinitely dear to him: We have dreadfully provoked God, but Christ has performed that righteousness that is infinitely precious in God's eyes.

And here is not only infinite strength and infinite worthiness, but infinite condescension; and love and mercy, as great as power and dignity: If you are a poor, distressed sinner, whose heart is ready to sink for fear that God never will have mercy on you, you need not be afraid to go to Christ, for fear that he is either unable or unwilling to help you: Here is a strong foundation, and an inexhaustible treasure, to answer the necessities of your poor soul; and here is infinite grace and gentleness to invite and embolden a poor, unworthy, fearful soul to come to it. If Christ accepts you, you need not fear but that you will be safe; for he is a strong lion for your defence: And if you come, you need not fear but that you shall be accepted; for he is like a lamb to all that come to him, and receives them with infinite grace and tenderness. It is true he has awful majesty; he is the great God, and is infinitely high above you; but there is this to encourage and embolden the poor sinner, that Christ is man as well as God; he is a creature, as well as the Creator; and he is the most humble and lowly in heart of any creature in heaven or earth. This may well make the poor, unworthy creature bold in coming to him. You need not hesitate one moment; but may run to him, and cast yourself upon him; you will certainly be graciously and meekly received by him. Though he be a lion, he will only be a lion to your enemies, but he will be a lamb to you. It could not have been conceived, had it not been so in the person of Christ, that there could have been so much in any Saviour, that is inviting, and tending to encourage sinners to trust in him. Whatever your circumstances are,

you need not be afraid to come to such a Saviour as this: Be you never so wicked a creature, here is worthiness enough: Be you never so poor, and mean, and ignorant a creature, there is no danger of being despised; for though he be so much greater than you, he is also immensely more humble than you. Any one of you that is a father or mother, will not despise one of your own children that comes to you in distress; much less danger is there of Christ despising you, if you in your heart come to him.....Here let me a little expostulate with the poor, burdened, distressed soul.

1. What are you afraid of, that you dare not venture your soul upon Christ? Are you afraid that he cannot save you; that he is not strong enough to conquer the enemies of your soul? But how can you desire one stronger than the "mighty God?" as Christ is called, Isa. ix. 6. Is there need of greater than infinite strength? Are you afraid that he will not be willing to stoop so low as to take any gracious notice of you? But then, look on him, as he stood in the ring of soldiers, exposing his blessed face to be buffeted and spit upon by them! Behold him bound, with his back uncovered to those that smote him! And behold him hanging on the cross! Do you think that he that had condescension enough to stoop to these things, and that for his crucifiers, will be unwilling to accept you if you come to him? Or, are you afraid, that if he does accept you, that God the Father will not accept him for you? But consider, will God reject his own Son, in whom his infinite delight is, and has been, from all eternity, and that is so united to him, that if he should reject him, he would reject himself?

2. What is there that you can desire should be in a Saviour, that is not in Christ? Or, wherein should you desire a Saviour should be otherwise than Christ is? What excellency is there wanting? What is there that is great or good? What is there that is venerable or winning? What is there that is adorable or endearing? Or, what can you think of, that would be encourageing, that is not to be found in the person of Christ? Would you have your Saviour to be great and honorable, be-

cause you are not willing to be beholden to a mean person? And is not Christ a person honorable enough to be worthy that you should be dependant on him? Is he not a person high enough to be worthy to be appointed to so honorable a work as your salvation? Would you not only have a Saviour that is of high degree, but would you have him, notwithstanding his exaltation and dignity, to be made also of low degree, that he might have experience of afflictions and trials, that he might learn by the things that he has suffered, to pity them that suffer and are tempted? And has not Christ been made low enough for you? And has he not suffered enough? Would you not only have him have experience of the afflictions you now suffer, but also of that amazing wrath that you fear hereafter, that he may know how to pity those that are in danger of it, and afraid of it? This Christ has had experience of, which experience gave him a greater sense of it, a thousand times, than you have, or any man living has. Would you have your Saviour to be one that is near to God, that so his mediation might be prevalent with him? And can you desire him to be nearer to God than Christ is, who is his only begotten Son, of the same essence with the Father? And would you not only have him near to God, but also near to you, that you may have free access to him? And would you have him nearer to you than to be in the same nature, and not only so, but united to you by a spiritual union, so close as to be fitly represented by the union of the wife to the husband, of the branch to the vine, of the member to the head; yea, so as to be looked upon as one, and called one spirit? For so he will be united to you, if you accept him. Would you have a Saviour that has given some great and extraordinary testimony of mercy and love to sinners, by something that he has done, as well as by what he says? And can you think or conceive of greater things than Christ has done? Was it not a great thing for him, who was God, to take upon him human nature; to be not only God, but man, thenceforward to all eternity? But would you look upon suffering for sinners to be a yet greater testimony of love to sinners, than merely doing, though it be never so extraordi-

nary a thing that he has done? And would you desire that a Saviour should suffer more than Christ has suffered for sinners? What is there wanting, or what would you add if you could, to make him more fit to be your Saviour?

But further, to induce you to accept of Christ as your Saviour, consider two things particularly.

1. How much Christ appears as the Lamb of God in his invitations to you to come to him and trust in him. With what sweet grace and kindness does he from time to time call and invite you; as Prov. viii. 4. "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men." And Isa. lv. 1.....3, "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price." How graciously is he here inviting every one that thirsts, and in so repeating his invitation over and over, "Come ye to the waters; come, buy and eat, yea, come!" And in declaring the excellency of that entertainment which he invites you to accept of, "Come, buy wine and milk;" and in assuring you that your poverty, and having nothing to pay for it, shall be no objection, "Come, he that hath no money, come without money, and without price!" And in the gracious arguments and expostulations that he uses with you! As it follows, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? And your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." As much as to say, "It is altogether needless for you to continue laboring and toiling for that which can never serve your turn, seeking rest in the world, and in your own righteousness:....I have made abundant provision for you, of that which is really good, and will fully satisfy your desires, and answer your end, and stand ready to accept of you: You need not be afraid; if you will come to me, I will engage to see all your wants supplied, and you made a happy creature." As he promises in the third verse, "Incline your ear, and come unto me: Hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mer-

cies of David." And so, Prov. ix. at the beginning. How gracious and sweet is the invitation there! "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither;" let you be never so poor, ignorant, and blind a creature, you shall be welcome. And in the following words, Christ sets forth the provision that he has made for you, "Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled." You are in a poor famishing state, and have nothing wherewith to feed your perishing soul; you have been seeking something, but yet remain destitute: Hearken, how Christ calls you to eat of his bread, and to drink of the wine that he hath mingled! And how much like a lamb does Christ appear in Matth. xi. 28,....30. "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest to your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." O thou poor distressed soul! Whoever thou art, that art afraid that you never shall be saved, consider that this that Christ mentions is your very case, when he calls to them that labor, and are heavy laden! And how he repeatedly promises you rest if you come to him! In the 28th verse he says, "I will give you rest." And in the 29th verse, "Ye shall find rest to your souls." This is what you want. This is the thing you have been so long in vain seeking after. O how sweet would rest be to you, if you could but obtain it! Come to Christ, and you shall obtain it. And hear how Christ, to encourage you, represents himself as a lamb! He tells you, that he is meek and lowly in heart; and are you afraid to come to such an one! And again, Rev. iii. 20. "Behold I stand at the door and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and I will sup with him, and he with me." Christ condescends not only to call you to him, but he comes to you; he comes to your door, and there knocks. He might send an officer and seize you as a rebel and vile malefactor; but instead of that, he comes and knocks at your door, and seeks that you would receive him into your house, as your friend and Saviour. And he not only knocks at your door,

but he stands there waiting, while you are backward and unwilling. And not only so, but he makes promises what he will do for you, if you will admit him, what privileges he will admit you to; he will "sup with you and you with him." And again, Rev. xxii. 16, 17. "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come: And let him that heareth, say, Come: And let him that is athirst, come: And whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." How does Christ here graciously set before you his own winning, attractive excellency! And how does he condescend to declare to you not only his own invitation, but the invitation of the Spirit and the bride, if by any means he might encourage you to come! And how does he invite every one that will, that they may "take of the waters of life freely," that they may take it a free gift, however precious it be, and though it be the water of life!

2. If you do come to Christ, he will appear as a lion, in his glorious power and dominion, to defend you. All those excellencies of his, in which he appears as a lion, shall be yours, and shall be employed for you in your defence, for your safety, and to promote your glory; he will be as a lion to fight against your enemies: He that touches you, or offends you, will provoke his wrath, as he that stirs up a lion. Unless your enemies can conquer this lion, they shall not be able to destroy or hurt you; unless they are stronger than he, they shall not be able to hinder your happiness. Isa. xxxi. 4. "For thus hath the Lord spoken unto me, Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abase himself for the noise of them; so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof."

III. Let what has been said be improved to induce you to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and choose him for your friend and portion. As there is such an admirable meeting of diverse excellencies in Christ, so there is every thing in him to

render him worthy of your love and choice, and to win and engage it. Whatsoever there is or can be, that is desirable to be in a friend, is in Christ, and that to the highest degree that can be desired.

Would you choose a friend that is a person of great dignity? It is a thing taking with men to have those for their friends that are much above them, because they look upon themselves honored by the friendship of such. Thus, how taking would it be with an inferior maid to be the object of the dear love of some great and excellent prince. But Christ is infinitely above you, and above all the princes of the earth; for he is King of kings. So honorable a person as this offers himself to you, in the nearest and dearest friendship.

And would you choose to have a friend not only great but good? In Christ, infinite greatness and infinite goodness meet together, and receive lustre and glory one from another. His greatness is rendered lovely by his goodness. The greater any one is without goodness, so much the greater evil; but when infinite goodness is joined with greatness, it renders it a glorious and adorable greatness. So, on the other hand, his infinite goodness receives lustre from his greatness. He that is of great understanding and ability, and is withal of a good and excellent disposition, is deservedly more esteemed than a lower and lesser being, with the same kind inclination and good will. Indeed, goodness is excellent in whatever subject it be found; it is beauty and excellency itself, and renders all excellent that are possessed of it; and yet more excellent when joined with greatness; as the very same excellent qualities of gold do render the body in which they are inherent more precious, and of greater value, when joined with greater than when with lesser dimensions. And how glorious is the sight to see him who is the great Creator and supreme Lord of heaven and earth, full of condescension, and tender pity and mercy, towards the mean and unworthy! His almighty power, and infinite majesty, and selfsufficiency, render his exceeding love and grace the more surprising. And how do his condescension and compassions endear his

majesty, power and dominion, and render those attributes pleasant, that would otherwise be only terrible! Would you not desire that your friend, though great and honorable, should be of such condescension and grace, and so to have the way opened to free access to him, that his exaltation above you might not hinder your free enjoyment of his friendship?

And would you choose not only that the infinite greatness and majesty of your friend should be, as it were, mollified and sweetened with condescension and grace; but would you also desire to have your friend in your own nature, that he might be brought nearer to you? Would you choose a friend far above you, and yet as it were upon a level with you too? (Though it be taking with men to have a near and dear friend of superior dignity, yet there is also an inclination in them to have their friend a sharer with them in circumstances.) Thus is Christ. Though he be the great God, yet he has, as it were, brought himself down to be upon a level with you, so as to become man as thou art, that he might not only be your Lord, but your brother, and that he might be the more fit to be a companion for such a worm of the dust. This is one end of Christ's taking upon him man's nature, that his people might be under advantages for a more familiar converse with him, than the infinite distance of the divine nature would allow of. And upon this account the church longed for Christ's incarnation, Cant. viii. 1. "O that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! When I should find thee without, I would kiss thee, yea, I should not be despised." One design of God in the gospel, is to bring us to make God the object of our undivided respect, that he may engross our regard every way, that whatever natural inclination there is in our souls, he may be the centre of it; that God may be all in all. But there is an inclination in the creature, not only to the adoration of a Lord and Sovereign, but to complacence in some one as a friend, to love and delight in some one that may be conversed with as a companion. And virtue and holiness do not destroy or weaken this inclination of our nature. But so hath God contrived in the affair

of our redemption, that a divine person may be the object even of this inclination of our nature. And in order hereto, such an one is come down to us, and has taken our nature, and is become one of us, and calls himself our friend, brother and companion. Psalm cxxii. 8. "For my brethren and companions' sake, will I now say, Peace be within thee."

But is it not enough to invite and encourage to free access to a friend so great and high, that he is one of infinite condescending grace, and also has taken your own nature, and is become man? But would you further, to embolden and win you, have him a man of wonderful meekness and humility? Why, such an one is Christ! He is not only become man for you, but far the meekest and most humble of all men, the greatest instance of these sweet virtues that ever was, or will be. And besides these, he has all other human excellencies in the highest perfection. These, indeed, are no proper addition to his divine excellencies. Christ has no more excellency in his person, since his incarnation, than he had before; for divine excellency is infinite, and cannot be added to: Yet his human excellencies are additional manifestations of his glory and excellency to us, and are additional recommendations of him to our esteem and love, who are of finite comprehension. Though his human excellencies are but communications and reflections of his divine; and though this light, as reflected, falls infinitely short of the divine fountain of light in its immediate glory; yet the reflection shines not without its proper advantages, as presented to our view and affection. As the glory of Christ appears in the qualifications of his human nature, it appears to us in excellencies that are of our own kind, that are exercised in our own way and manner, and so, in some respects, are peculiarly fitted to invite our acquaintance and draw our affection. The glory of Christ, as it appears in his divinity, though it be far brighter, yet doth it also more dazzle our eyes, and exceeds the strength or comprehension of our sight: But as it shines in the human excellencies of Christ, it is brought more to a level with our conceptions, and suitableness to our nature and manner, yet

retaining a semblance of the same divine beauty, and a savor of the same divine sweetness. But as both divine and human excellencies meet together in Christ, they set off and recommend each other to us. It is what tends to endear the divine and infinite majesty and holiness of Christ to us, that these are attributes of a person that is in our nature, that is one of us, that is become our brother, and is the meekest and humblest of men; it encourages us to look upon these divine perfections, however high and great, yet as what we have some near concern in, and more of a right to, and liberty freely to enjoy. And on the other hand, how much more glorious and surprising do the meekness, the humility, obedience and resignation, and other human excellencies of Christ appear, when we consider that they are in so great a person, as the eternal Son of God, the Lord of heaven and earth!

By your choosing Christ for your friend and portion, you will obtain these two infinite benefits.

1. Christ will give himself to you, with all those various excellencies that meet in him, to your full and everlasting enjoyment. He will ever after treat you as his dear friend; and you shall ere long be where he is, and shall behold his glory, and shall dwell with him, in most free and intimate communion and enjoyment.

When the saints get to heaven, they shall not merely see Christ, and have to do with him as subjects and servants with a glorious and gracious Lord and Sovereign, but Christ will entertain them as friends and brethren. This we may learn from the manner of Christ's conversing with his disciples here on earth: Though he was their sovereign Lord, and did not refuse, but required their supreme respect and adoration, yet he did not treat them as earthly sovereigns are wont to do their subjects; he did not keep them at an awful distance; but all along conversed with them with the most friendly familiarity, as a father amongst a company of children, yea, as with brethren. So he did with the twelve, and so he did with Mary, Martha and Lazarus. He told his disciples, that he did not call them servants, but friends; and we read of one of

them that leaned on his bosom. And doubtless he will not treat his disciples with less freedom and endearment in heaven: He will not keep them at a greater distance for his being in a state of exaltation; but he will rather take them into a state of exaltation with him. This will be the improvement Christ will make of his own glory, to make his beloved friends partakers with him, to glorify them in his glory, as he says to his Father, John xvii. 22, 23. "And the glory which thou hast given me, have I given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them," &c. We are to consider, that though Christ is greatly exalted, yet he is exalted, not as a private person for himself only, but as his people's head; he is exalted in their name, and upon their account, as the first fruits, and as representing the whole harvest. He is not exalted that he may be at a greater distance from them, but that they may be exalted with him. The exaltation and honor of the head is not to make a greater distance between the head and the members; but the members have the same relation and union with the head they had before, and are honored with the head; and instead of the distance being greater, the union shall be nearer and more perfect. When believers get to heaven, Christ will conform them to himself; as he is set down on his Father's throne, so they shall sit down with him on his throne, and shall in their measure be made like him.

When Christ was going to heaven, he comforted his disciples with that, that after a while, he would come again, and take them to himself, that they might be with him again. And we are not to suppose that when the disciples got to heaven, they found him keeping a greater distance than he used to do. No, doubtless, he embraced them as friends, and welcomed them to his and their Father's house, and to his and their glory. They that had been his friends in this world, that had been together with him here, and had together partaken of sorrows and troubles, are now welcomed by him to rest, and to partake of glory with him. He took them and led them into his chambers, and shewed them all his glory; as he prayed, John xvii. 24. Father, I will that they also

om thou hast given me, be with me, that they may behold the glory which thou hast given me." And he led them to his living fountains of waters and made them partake of his delights; as he prays, John xvii. 13. "That my joy may be fulfilled in themselves;" and set them down with him at his table in his kingdom, and made them partake with him of his dainties, according to his promise, Luke xxii. 30, and led them into his banqueting house, and made them to drink new wine with him in the kingdom of his heavenly Father; as he foretold them when he instituted the Lord's supper. Matth. xxvi. 29.

Yea, the saints' conversation with Christ in heaven shall not only be as intimate, and their access to him as free, as of the disciples on earth, but in many respects much more so: For in heaven, that vital union shall be perfect, which is exceeding imperfect here. While the saints are in this world, there are great remains of sin and darkness, to separate or disunite them from Christ, which shall then all be removed. This is not a time for that full acquaintance, and those glorious manifestations of love which Christ designs for his people hereafter; which seems to be signified by Christ's speech to Mary Magdalene, when ready to embrace him, when she met him after his resurrection. John xx. 17. "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father."....

When the saints shall see Christ's glory and exaltation in heaven, it will indeed possess their hearts with the greater admiration and adoring respect, but will not awe them into any separation, but will serve only to heighten their surprise and joy, when they find Christ condescending to admit them to such intimate access, and so freely and fully communicating himself to them.

So that if we choose Christ for our friend and portion, we shall hereafter be so received to him, that there shall be nothing to hinder the fullest enjoyment of him, to the satisfying the utmost cravings of our souls. We may take our full swing at gratifying our spiritual appetite after these holy pleasures. Christ will then say, as in Cant. v. 1. "Eat, O friends,

drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." And this shall be our entertainment to all eternity! There shall never be any end of this happiness, or any thing to interrupt our enjoyment of it, or in the least to molest us in it!

2. By your being united to Christ, you will have a more glorious union with, and enjoyment of God the Father, than otherwise could be. For hereby the saints' relation to God becomes much nearer; they are the children of God in an higher manner than otherwise could be. For, being members of God's own natural Son, they are in a sort partakers of his relation to the Father: They are not only sons of God by regeneration, but by a kind of communion in the sonship of the eternal Son. This seems to be intended, Gal. iv. 4, 5, 6. "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that are under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."....The church is the daughter of God, not only as he hath begotton her by his word and Spirit, but as she is the spouse of his eternal Son.

So we, being members of the Son, are partakers in our measure of the Father's love to the Son, and complacence in him. John xvii. 23. "I in them, and thou in me....Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." And verse 26. "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them." And chapter xvi. 27. "The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." So we shall, according to our capacities, be partakers of the Son's enjoyment of God, and have his joy fulfilled in ourselves, John xvii. 13. And by this means we shall come to an immensely higher, more intimate, and full enjoyment of God, than otherwise could have been. For there is doubtless an infinite intimacy between the Father and the Son; which is expressed by his being in the bosom of the Father. And saints being in him, shall, in their measure and manner, partake with him in it, and the blessedness of it.

And thus is the affair of our redemption ordered, that thereby we are obliged to an immensely more exalted kind of union with God, and enjoyment of him, both the Father and the Son, than otherwise could have been. For Christ being united to the human nature, we have advantage for a more free and full enjoyment of him, than we could have had if he had remained only in the divine nature. So again, we being united to a divine person, as his members, can have a more intimate union and intercourse with God the Father, who is only in the divine nature, than otherwise could be. Christ, who is a divine person, by taking on him our nature, descends from the infinite distance and height above us, and is brought nigh to us; whereby we have advantage for the full enjoyment of him. And, on the other hand, we, by being in Christ, a divine person, do as it were ascend up to God, through the infinite distance, and have hereby advantage for the full enjoyment of him also.

This was the design of Christ to bring it to pass, that he, and his Father, and his people might all be united in one. John xvii. 21, 22, 23. "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." Christ has brought it to pass that those that the Father has given should be brought into the household of God; that he and his Father, and his people, should be, as it were, one society, one family; that the church should be as it were admitted into the society of the blessed Trinity.

SERMON VII.

Ruth's Resolution.

RUTH i. 16.

AND RUTH SAID, INTREAT ME NOT TO LEAVE THEE, OR TO RETURN FROM FOLLOWING AFTER THEE; FOR WHITHER THOU GOEST, I WILL GO; AND WHERE THOU LODGEST, I WILL LODGE: THY PEOPLE SHALL BE MY PEOPLE, AND THY GOD MY GOD.

THE things that we have the history of, in this book of Ruth, seem to be inserted into the canon of the scripture, especially on two accounts.

First, Because Christ was of Ruth's posterity. The Holy Ghost thought fit to take particular notice of that marriage of Boaz with Ruth, whence sprang the Saviour of the world. We may often observe it, that the Holy Spirit that indited the scriptures, often takes notice of little things, minute occurrences, that do but remotely relate to Jesus Christ.

Secondly, Because this history seems to be typical of the calling of the Gentile church, and indeed of the conversion of every believer. Ruth was not originally of Israel, but was a Moabitess, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel: But she forsook her own people, and the idols of the Gentiles, to worship the God of Israel, and to join herself to that people: Herein she seems to be a type of the Gentile church, and al-

so of every sincere convert. Ruth was the mother of Christ: He came of her posterity: So the church is Christ's mother, as she is represented, Rev. xii. at the beginning. And so also is every true Christian his mother. Matth. xii. 50. "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Christ is what the soul of every one of the elect is in travail with, in the new birth. Ruth forsook all her natural relations, and her own country, the land of her nativity, and all her former possessions there, for the sake of the God of Israel; as every true Christian forsakes all for Christ. Psalm xlv. 10. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy Father's house."

Naomi was now returning out of the land of Moab, into the land of Israel, with her two daughters in law, Orpah and Ruth; who well represent to us two sorts of professors of religion: Orpah that sort that indeed make a fair profession, and seem to set out well, but continue but for a while, and then turn back; Ruth that sort that are sound and sincere, and therefore are stedfast and persevering in the way that they have set out in. Naomi, in the preceding verses, represents to these her daughters the difficulties of their leaving their own country to go with her. And in this verse may be observed,

1. The remarkable conduct and behavior of Ruth on this occasion; with what inflexible resolution she cleaves to Naomi, and follows her. When Naomi first arose to return from the country of Moab into the land of Israel, Orpah and Ruth both set out with her; and Naomi exhorts them both to return: And they both of them wept, and seemed as if they could not bear the thoughts of leaving her, and appeared as if they were resolved to go with her. Verse 10. "And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people." Then Naomi says to them again, "Turn again, my daughters, go your way," &c. And then they were greatly affected again, and Orpah returned and went back. Now Ruth's stedfastness in her purpose had a greater trial, but yet

is not overcome: "She clave unto her," verse 14. Then Naomi speaks to her again, verse 15. "Behold thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods; return thou after thy sister in law." And then she shews her immoveable resolution in the text and following verse.

2. I would particularly observe that wherein the virtuousness of this her resolution consists, viz. that it was for the sake of the God of Israel, and that she might be one of his people, that she was thus resolved to cleave to Naomi: "Thy people shall be my people; and thy God my God." It was for God's sake that she did thus: And therefore her so doing is afterwards spoken of as a virtuous behavior in her, chap. ii. 11. 12. "And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law, since the death of thine husband; and how thou hast left thy father, and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust." She left her father and mother, and the land of her nativity, to come and trust under the shadow of God's wings; and she had indeed a full reward given her, as Boaz wished; for besides immediate spiritual blessings to her own soul, and eternal rewards in another world, she was rewarded with plentiful and prosperous outward circumstances in the family of Boaz; and God raised up David and Solomon of her seed, and established the crown of Israel (the people that she chose before her own people) in her posterity; and (which is much more) of her seed he raised up Jesus Christ, in whom all the families of the earth are blessed.

From the words thus opened I observe this for the subject of my present discourse.

"When those that we have formerly been conversant with, are turning to God, and joining themselves to his people, it ought to be our firm resolution, that we will not leave them; but that their people shall be our people, and their God our God."

It is sometimes so, that of those that have been conversant one with another, that have dwelt together as neighbors, and have been often together as companions, or have been united in near relation, and have been together in darkness, bondage, and misery, in the service of Satan, some are enlightened, and have their minds changed, are made to see the great evil of sin, and have their hearts turned to God, and are influenced by the holy Spirit of God, to leave their company that are on Satan's side, to go and join themselves with that blessed company that are with Jesus Christ; they are made willing to forsake the tents of wickedness, to dwell in the land of uprightness with the people of God.

And sometimes this proves a final parting or separation between them and those that they have been formerly conversant with. Though it may be no parting in outward respects, they may still dwell together, and may converse one with another; yet in other respects, it sets them at a great distance one from another: One is a child of God, and the other the enemy of God; one is in a miserable, and the other in a happy condition; one is a citizen of the heavenly Zion, the other is under condemnation to hell. They are no longer together in those respects wherein they used to be together: They used to be of one mind to serve sin, and do Satan's work; now they are of contrary minds. They used to be together in worldliness and sinful vanity; now they are of exceeding different dispositions. They are separated as they are in different kingdoms; the one remains in the kingdom of darkness, the other is translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. And sometimes they are finally separated in these respects; while one dwells in the land of Israel, and in the house of God; the other, like Orpah, lives and dies in the land of Moab.

Now it is lamentable when it is thus: It is awful, being parted so; it is doleful, when of those that have formerly been together in sin, some turn to God, and join themselves with his people, that it should prove a parting between them and their former companions and acquaintance. It should be our firm and inflexible resolution in such a case, that it shall be

no parting, but that we will follow them, that their people shall be our people, and their God our God; and that for the following reasons.

I. Because their God is a glorious God. There is none like him, who is infinite in glory and excellency: He is the most high God, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders: His name is excellent in all the earth, and his glory is above the earth and the heavens: Among the Gods there is none like unto him; there is none in heaven to be compared to him, nor are there any among the sons of the mighty that can be likened unto him. Their God is the fountain of all good, and an inexhaustible fountain; he is an all-sufficient God; a God that is able to protect and defend them, and do all things for them; He is the king of glory, the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle: A strong rock, and an high tower. There is none like the God of Jeshurun, who rideth on the heaven in their help, and in his excellency on the sky: The eternal God is their refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: He is a God that hath all things in his hands, and does whatsoever he pleases: He killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up; he maketh poor and maketh rich: The pillars of the earth are the Lord's. Their God is an infinitely holy God: There is none holy as the Lord. And he is infinitely good and merciful. Many that others worship and serve as gods, are cruel beings, spirits that seek the ruin of souls; but this is a God that delighteth in mercy; his grace is infinite, and endures forever: He is love itself, an infinite fountain and ocean of it.

Such a God is their God! Such is the excellency of Jacob! Such is the God of them who have forsaken their sins and are converted! They have made a wise choice who have chosen this God for their God. They have made an happy exchange indeed, that have exchanged sin, and the world, for such a God!

They have an excellent and glorious Saviour, who is the only begotten Son of God; the brightness of his Father's glory; one in whom God from eternity had infinite delight; a

Saviour of infinite love ; one that has shed his own blood, and made his soul an offering for their sins, and one that is able to save them to the uttermost.

II. Their people are an excellent and happy people. God has renewed them, and instamped his own image upon them, and made them partakers of his holiness. They are more excellent than their neighbors, Prov. xii. 26. Yea, they are the excellent of the earth, Psalm xvi. 3. They are lovely in the sight of the angels ; and they have their souls adorned with those graces that in the sight of God himself are of great price.

The people of God are the most excellent and happy society in the world. That God whom they have chosen for their God, is their father ; he has pardoned all their sins, and they are at peace with him ; and he has admitted them to all the privileges of his children. As they have devoted themselves to God, so God has given himself to them: He is become their salvation, and their portion; His power and mercy, and all his attributes, are theirs. They are in a safe state, free from all possibility of perishing : Satan has no power to destroy them. God carries them on eagles' wings, far above Satan's reach, and above the reach of all the enemies of their souls. God is with them in this world ; they have his gracious presence : God is for them ; who then can be against them ? As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so Jehovah is round about them. God is their shield, and their exceeding great reward ; and their fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ ; And they have the divine promise and oath, that in the world to come they shall dwell for ever in the glorious presence of God.

It may well be sufficient to induce us to resolve to cleave to those that forsake their sins and idols, to join themselves with this people, that God is with them, Zech. viii. 23, " Thus saith the Lord of hosts, " In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you : For we have heard that God is with

you." So should persons, as it were, take hold of the skirt of their neighbors and companions that have turned to God, and resolve that they will go with them, because God is with them.

III. Happiness is no where else to be had, but in their God, and with their people. There are that are called gods many, and lords many. Some make gods of their pleasures; some choose Mammon for their god; some make gods of their own supposed excellencies, or the outward advantages they have above their neighbors: Some choose one thing for their god, and others another: But men can be happy in no other god but the God of Israel: He is the only fountain of happiness. Other gods cannot help in calamity; nor can any of them afford what the poor empty soul stands in need of. Let men adore those other gods never so much, and call upon them never so earnestly, and serve them never so diligently, they will nevertheless remain poor, wretched, unsatisfied, undone creatures. All other people are miserable, but that people whose God is the Lord.....The world is divided into two societies: There are the people of God, the little flock of Jesus Christ, that company that we read of, Rev. xiv. 4. "These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins: These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth: These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God, and to the Lamb:" And there are those that belong to the kingdom of darkness, that are without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. All that are of this latter company are wretched and undone; they are the enemies of God, and under his wrath and condemnation: They are the devil's slaves, that serve him blindfold, and are befooled and ensnared by him, and hurried along in the broad way to eternal perdition.

IV. When those that we have formerly been conversant with are turning to God and to his people, their example ought to influence us. Their example should be looked upon as the call of God to us, to do as they have done. God,

when he changes the heart of one, calls upon another; especially does he loudly call on those that have been their friends and acquaintance. We have been influenced by their examples in evil; and shall we cease to follow them, when they make the wisest choice that ever they made, and do the best thing that ever they did? If we have been companions with them in worldliness, in vanity, in unprofitable and sinful conversation, it will be an hard case, if there must be a parting now, because we be not willing to be companions with them in holiness and true happiness. Men are greatly influenced by seeing one another's prosperity in other things. If those that they have been much conversant with, grow rich, and obtain any great earthly advantages, it awakens their ambition, and eager desire after the like prosperity: How much more should they be influenced, and stirred up to follow them, and be like them, when they obtain that spiritual and eternal happiness, that is infinitely of more worth than all the prosperity and glory of this world!

V. Our resolutions to cleave to and follow those that are turning to God, and joining themselves to his people, ought to be fixed and strong, because of the great difficulty of it. If we will cleave to them, and have their God for our God, and their people for our people, we must mortify and deny all our lusts, and cross every evil appetite and inclination, and forever part with all sin. But our lusts are many and violent. Sin is naturally exceeding dear to us; to part with it is compared to plucking out our right eyes. Men may refrain from wonted ways of sin for a little while, and may deny their lusts in a partial degree, with less difficulty; but it is heartrending work, finally to part with all sin, and to give our dearest lusts a bill of divorce, utterly to send them away. But this we must do, if we would follow those that are truly turning to God: Yea, we must not only forsake sin, but must, in a sense, forsake all the world, Luke, xiv. 33. "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." That is, he must forsake all in his heart, and must come to a thorough disposition and readiness actually to quit all for God, and

the glorious spiritual privileges of his people, whenever the case may require it; and that without any prospect of any thing of the like nature, or any worldly thing whatsoever, to make amends for it; and all to go into a strange country, a land that has hitherto been unseen; like Abraham, who being called of God, "went out of his own country, and from his kindred, and from his father's house, for a land that God should shew him, not knowing whither he went."

Thus, it was a hard thing for Ruth to forsake her native country, and her father and mother, her kindred and acquaintance, and all the pleasant things she had in the land of Moab, to dwell in the land of Israel, where she never had been. Naomi told her of the difficulties once and again. They were too hard for her sister Orpah; the consideration of them turned her back after she was set out. Her resolution was not firm enough to overcome them. But so firmly resolved was Ruth, that she brake through all; she was stedfast in it, that, let the difficulty be what it would, she would not leave her mother in law. So persons had need to be very firm in their resolution to conquer the difficulties that are in the way of cleaving to them that are indeed turning from sin to God.

VI. Our cleaving to them, and having their God for our God, and their people for our people, depends on our resolution and choice; and that in two respects.

1. The firmness of resolution in using means in order to it, is the way to have means effectual. There are means appointed in order to our becoming some of the true Israel, and having their God for our God; and the thorough use of these means is the way to have success; but not a slack or slighty use of them. And that we may be thorough, there is need of strength of resolution, a firm and inflexible disposition, and bent of mind to be universal in the use of means, and to do what we do with our might, and to persevere in it. Matth. xi. 12. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

2. A choosing of their God, and their people, with a full determination, and with the whole soul, is the condition of an

union with them. God gives every man his choice in this matter; as Orpah and Ruth had their choice, whether they would go with Naomi into the land of Israel, or stay in the land of Moab. A natural man may choose deliverance from hell; but no man doth ever heartily choose God and Christ, and the spiritual benefits that Christ has purchased, and the happiness of God's people, till he is converted. On the contrary, he is averse to them; he has no relish of them; and is wholly ignorant of the inestimable worth and value of them.

Many carnal men do seem to choose these things, but do it not really; as Orpah seemed at first to choose to forsake Moab to go into the land of Israel: But when Naomi came to set before her the difficulty of it, she went back; and thereby shewed that she was not fully determined in her choice, and that her whole soul was not in it, as Ruth's was.

APPLICATION.

The use that I shall make of what has been said, is to move sinners to this resolution, with respect to those amongst us that have lately turned to God, and joined themselves to the flock of Christ. It is so, through the abundant mercy and grace of God to us in this place, that it may be said of many of you that are in a Christless condition, that you have lately been left by those that were formerly with you in such a state. There are those that you have formerly been conversant with, that have lately forsaken a life of sin and the service of Satan, and have turned to God, and fled to Christ, and joined themselves to that blessed company that are with him. They formerly were with you in sin and in misery; but now they are with you no more, in that state or manner of life: They are changed, and have fled from the wrath to come: They have chosen a life of holiness here, and the enjoyment of God hereafter. They were formerly your associates in bondage, and were with you in Satan's business; but now you have their company no longer in these things. Many of you have seen those that you live with under the same roof, turning from be-

ing any longer with you in sin, to be with the people of Jesus Christ. Some of you that are husbands, have had your wives; and some of you that are wives, have had your husbands; some of you that are children, have had your parents; and parents have had your children; many of you have had your brothers and sisters; and many your near neighbors, and acquaintance, and special friends; many of you that are young have had your companions: I say, many of you have had those that you have been thus concerned with, leaving you, forsaking that doleful life, and wretched state, that you still continue in. God of his good pleasure, and wonderful grace, hath lately caused it to be so in this place, that multitudes have been forsaking their old abodes in the land of Moab, and under the gods of Moab, and going into the land of Israel, to put their trust under the wings of the Lord God of Israel. Though you and they have been nearly related, and have dwelt together, or have been often together, and intimately acquainted one with another, they have been taken, and you hitherto left! O let it not be the foundation of a final parting! But earnestly follow them; be firm in your resolution in this matter. Do not do as Orpah did, who, though at first she made as though she would follow Naomi, yet when she had the difficulty of it set before her, went back: But say as Ruth, "I will not leave thee; but where thou goest, I will go: Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Say as she said, and do as she did. Consider the excellency of their God, and their Saviour, and the happiness of their people, the blessed state that they are in, and the doleful state that you are in.

You that are old sinners, that have lived long in the service of Satan, have lately seen some that were with you, that have travelled with you in the paths of sin these many years, that with you enjoyed great means and advantages, that have had calls and warnings with you, and have with you passed through remarkable times of the pouring out of God's Spirit in this place, and have hardened their hearts and stood it out with you, and with you have grown old in sin; I say, you have

seen some of them turning to God, i. e. you have seen those evidences of it in them, whence you may rationally judge that it is so. O let it not be a final parting! You have been thus long together in sin, and under condemnation; let it be your firm resolution, that, if possible, you will be with them still, now they are in a holy and happy state, and that you will follow them into the holy and pleasant land.

You that tell of your having been seeking salvation for many years, though, without doubt, in a poor dull way, in comparison of what you ought to have done, you have seen some that have been with you in that respect, that were old sinners, and old seekers, as you are, obtaining mercy. God has lately roused them from their dullness, and caused them to alter their hand, and put them on more thorough endeavors; and they have now after so long a time, heard God's voice, and have fled for refuge to the rock of ages. Let this awaken earnestness and resolution in you. Resolve that you will not leave them.

You that are in your youth, how many have you seen of your age and standing, that have of late hopefully chosen God for their God, and Christ for their Saviour! You have followed them in sin, and have perhaps followed them into vain company; and will you not now follow them to Christ?

And you that are children, there have lately been some of your sort that have repented of their sins, and have loved the Lord Jesus Christ, and trusted in him, and are become God's children, as we have reason to hope: Let it stir you up to resolve to your utmost to seek and cry to God, that you may have the like change made in your hearts, that their people may be your people, and their God your God.

You that are great sinners, that have made yourselves distinguishingly guilty by the wicked practices you have lived in, there are some of your sort that have lately (as we have reason to hope) had their hearts broken for sin, and have forsaken it, and have trusted in the blood of Christ for the pardon of it, and have chosen an holy life, and have betaken them-

selves to the ways of wisdom: Let it excite and encourage you resolutely to cleave to them, and earnestly to follow them.

Let the following things be here considered.

1. That your soul is as precious as theirs. It is immortal as theirs is; and stands in as much need of happiness, and can as ill bear eternal misery. You were born in the same miserable condition that they were, having the same wrath of God abiding on you. You must stand before the same judge; who will be as strict in judgment with you as with them; and your own righteousness will stand you in no more stead before him than theirs; and therefore you stand in as absolute necessity of a Saviour as they. Carnal confidences can no more answer your end than theirs; nor can this world or its enjoyments serve to make you happy without God and Christ, more than them. When the bridegroom comes, the foolish virgins stand in as much need of oil as the wise, Matth. xxv. at the beginning.

2. Unless you follow them in their turning to God, their conversion will be a foundation of an eternal separation between you and them. You will be in different interests, and in exceeding different states, as long as you live; they the children of God, and you the children of Satan; and you will be parted in another world: When you come to die, there will be a vast separation made between you. Luke xvi. 26. "And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." And you will be parted at the day of judgment. You will be parted at Christ's first appearance in the clouds of heaven. While they are caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, to be ever with the Lord, you will remain below, confined to this cursed ground, that is kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men. You will appear separated from them, while you stand before the great judgment seat, they being at the right hand, while you are set at the left. Matth. xxv. 32, 33. "And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall sepa-

rate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." And you shall then appear in exceeding different circumstances: While you stand with devils in the image and deformity of devils, and in ineffable horror and amazement, they shall appear in glory, sitting on thrones, as assessors with Christ, and as such passing judgment upon you, 1 Cor. vi. 2. And what shame and confusion will then cover you, when so many of your contemporaries, your equals, your neighbors, relations and companions, shall be honored, and openly acknowledged, and confessed by the glorious Judge of the universe, and Redeemer of saints, and shall be seen by you sitting with him in such glory, and you shall appear to have neglected your salvation, and not to have improved your opportunities, and rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, the same person that will then appear as your great judge, and you shall be the subjects of such wrath, and, as it were, trodden down in eternal contempt and disgrace! Dan. xii. 2. "Some shall rise to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." And what a wide separation will the sentence that shall then be passed and executed make between you and them? When you shall be sent away out of the presence of the Judge, with indignation and abhorrence, as cursed and loathsome creatures, and they shall be sweetly accosted and invited into his glory as his dear friends, and the blessed of his Father? When you, with all that vast throng of wicked and accursed men and devils, shall descend with loud lamentings, and horrid shrieks into that dreadful gulf of fire and brimstone, and shall be swallowed up in that great and everlasting furnace; while they shall joyfully, and with sweet songs of glory and praise, ascend with Christ, and all that beauteous and blessed company of saints and angels, into eternal felicity, in the glorious presence of God, and the sweet embraces of his love; and you and they shall spend eternity in such a separation, and immensely different circumstances! And that however you have been intimately acquainted and nearly related, closely united and mutually conversant here in

this world; and how much soever you have taken delight in each others' company! Shall it be so after you have been together a great while, each of you in undoing yourselves, enhancing your guilt, and heaping up wrath, that their so wisely changing their minds and their course, and choosing such happiness for themselves, should now at length be the beginning of such an exceeding and everlasting separation between you and them? How awful will it be to be parted so!

3. Consider the great encouragement that God gives you, earnestly to strive for the same blessing that others have obtained. There is great encouragement in the word of God to sinners to seek salvation; in the revelation, that we have of the abundant provision made for the salvation even of the chief of sinners, and in the appointment of so many means to be used with and by sinners in order to their salvation; and by the blessing which God in his word connects with the means of his appointment. There is hence great encouragement for all, at all times, that will be thorough in using these means. But now God gives extraordinary encouragement in his providence, by pouring out his Spirit so remarkably amongst us, and bringing savingly home to himself all sorts, young and old, rich and poor, wise and unwise, sober and vicious, old selfrighteous seekers, and profligate livers: No sort are exempt. There is now at this day amongst us the loudest call, and the greatest encouragement, and the widest door open to sinners, to escape out of a state of sin and condemnation, that perhaps God ever granted in New England. Who is there that has an immortal soul, that is so sottish as not to improve such an opportunity, and that will not bestir himself with all his might now? How unseasonable is negligence, and how exceeding unseasonable is discouragement, at such a day as this! Will you be so stupid as to neglect your soul now? Will any mortal amongst us be so unreasonable as to lagg behind, or look back in discouragement, when God opens such a door? Let every single person be thoroughly awake! Le-

every one encourage himself now to press forward, and fly for his life!

4. Consider how earnestly desirous they that have obtained are that you should follow them, and that their people should be your people, and their God your God. They desire that you should partake of that great good that God has given them, and that unspeakable and eternal blessedness that he has promised them: They wish and long for it. If you do not go with them, and are not still of their company, it will not be for want of their willingness, but your own. That of Moses to Hobab is the language of every true saint of your acquaintance to you. Numb. x. 29. "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: Come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." As Moses, when on his journey through the wilderness, followed the pillar of cloud and fire, invited Hobab, that he had been acquainted with, and nearly allied to, out of the land of Midian, where Moses had formerly dwelt with him, to go with him and his people to Canaan, to partake with them in the good that God had promised them; so do those of your friends and acquaintance invite you, out of a land of darkness and wickedness, where they have formerly been with you, to go with them to the heavenly Canaan. The company of saints, the true church of Christ, invite you. The lovely bride calls you to the marriage supper. She hath authority to invite guests to her own wedding; and you ought to look on her invitation and desire, as the call of Christ the bridegroom; for it is the voice of his Spirit in her, Rev. xxii. 17. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." Where seems to be a reference to what had been said, chapter xix. 7, 8, 9. "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." It is with respect to this her marriage supper, that she, from the motion of the Spirit

of the Lamb in her, says, Come. So that you are invited on all hands; all conspire to call you. God the Father invites you: This is the King that has made a marriage for his Son; and he sends forth his servants, the ministers of the gospel, to invite the guests. And the Son himself invites you: It is he that speaks, Rev. xxii. 17. "And let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him come." He tells us who he is in the foregoing verse, "I Jesus, the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star." And God's ministers invite you, and all the church invites you; and there will be joy in the presence of the angels of God that hour that you accept the invitation.

5. Consider what a doleful company that will be that be left after this extraordinary time of mercy is over. We have reason to think that there will be a number left. We read that when Ezekiel's healing waters increased so abundantly, and the healing effect of them was so very general; yet there were certain places, where the waters came, that never were healed. Ezek. xlvii. 9, 10, 11. "And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live. And there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither; for they shall be healed, and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it, from Engedi even unto Eneglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets: Their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea exceeding many. But the miry places thereof, and the marshes thereof, shall not be healed, they shall be given to salt." And even in the apostles' times, when there was such wonderful success of the gospel, yet wherever they came there were some that did not believe. Acts xiii. 48. "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed." And chapter xxviii. 24. "And some believed, and some believed not."

So we have no reason to expect but there will be some left amongst us. It is to be hoped it will be but a small company: But what a doleful company will it be! How darkly and awfully will it look upon them! If you shall be of that company, how well may your friends and relations lament over you, and bemoan your dark and dangerous circumstances! If you would not be one of them, make haste, delay not, and look not behind you. Shall all sorts obtain, shall every one press into the kingdom of God, while you stay loitering behind in a doleful undone condition? Shall every one take heaven, while you remain with no other portion but this world? Now take up that resolution, that if it be possible you will cleave to them that have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before them. Count the cost of a thorough, violent, and perpetual pursuit of salvation, and forsake all, as Ruth forsook her own country, and all her pleasant enjoyments in it. Do not do as Orpah did; who set out, and then was discouraged, and went back; but hold out with Ruth through all discouragement and opposition. When you consider others that have chosen the better part, let that resolution be ever firm with you: "Where thou goest, I will go; where thou lodgest I will lodge: Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

SERMON VIII.

The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners.

ROMANS iii. 19.

.....THAT EVERY MOUTH MAY BE STOPPED.....

THE main subject of the doctrinal part of this epistle, is the free grace of God in the salvation of men by Jesus Christ; especially as it appears in the doctrine of justification by faith alone. And the more clearly to evince this doctrine, and shew the reason of it, the apostle, in the first place, establishes that point, that no flesh living can be justified by the deeds of the law. And to prove it, he is very large and particular in shewing, that all mankind, not only Gentiles but Jews, are under sin, and so under the condemnation of the law; which is what he insists upon from the beginning of the epistle to this place. He first begins with the Gentiles; and in the first chapter shews that they are under sin, by setting forth the exceeding corruptions and horrid wickedness that overspread the Gentile world: And then through the second chapter, and the former part of this third chapter, to the text and following verse, he shews the same of the Jews, that they also are in the same circumstances with the Gentiles in this regard. They had an high thought of themselves, because

they were God's covenant people, and circumcised, and the children of Abraham. They despised the Gentiles as polluted, condemned, and accursed; but looked on themselves, on account of their external privileges, and ceremonial and moral righteousness, as a pure and holy people, and the children of God, as the apostle observes in the second chapter. It was therefore strange doctrine to them, that they also were unclean and guilty in God's sight, and under the condemnation and curse of the law. The apostle does therefore, on account of their strong prejudices against such doctrine, the more particularly insist upon it, and shews that they are no better than the Gentiles; and as in the 9th verse of this chapter, "What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin." And to convince them of it, he then produces certain passages out of their own law, or the Old Testament, (whose authority they pretend a great regard to) from the 9th verse to the verse wherein is our text. And it may be observed, that the apostle, *first*, cites certain passages to prove that mankind are all corrupt, in the 10th, 11th, and 12th verses: "As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no not one." *Secondly*, The passages he cites next, are to prove, that not only all are corrupt, but each one wholly corrupt, as it were all over unclean, from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet; and therefore several particular parts of the body are mentioned, as the throat, the tongue, the lips, the mouth, the feet; verses, 13, 14, 15. "Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood." And, *Thirdly*, He quotes other passages to shew, that each one is not only all over corrupt, but corrupt to a desperate degree, in the 16th, 17th, and 18th verses; in which the exceeding degree of their corruption is shewn, both by affirming and denying: By af-

firmatively expressing the most pernicious nature and tendency of their wickedness, in the 16th verse: "Destruction and misery are in their ways." And then by denying all good or godliness of them, in the 17th and 18th verses, "And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes." And then, lest the Jews should think these passages of their law do not concern them, and that only the Gentiles are intended in them, the apostle shews, in the verse of the text, not only, that they are not exempt, but that they especially must be understood: "Now we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law." By those that are under the law is meant the Jews; and the Gentiles by those that are without law; as appears by the 12th verse of the preceding chapter. There is a special reason to understand the law, as speaking to and of them, to whom it was immediately given. And therefore the Jews would be unreasonable in exempting themselves. And if we examine the places of the Old Testament whence these passages are taken, we shall see plainly that special respect is had to the wickedness of the people of that nation, in every one of them. So that the law shuts all up in universal and desperate wickedness, *that every mouth may be stopped;* the mouths of the Jews, as well as of the Gentiles, notwithstanding all those privileges by which they were distinguished from the Gentiles.

The things that the law says, are sufficient to stop the mouths of all mankind, in two respects.

1. To stop them from boasting of their righteousness, as the Jews were wont to do; as the apostle observes in the 23d verse of the preceding chapter.....That the apostle has respect to stopping their mouths in this respect, appears by the 27th verse of the context, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded." The law stops our mouths from making of any plea for life, or the favor of God, or any positive good, from our own righteousness.

2. To stop them from making any excuse for ourselves, or objection against the execution of the sentence of the law;

or the infliction of the punishment that it threatens. That it is intended, appears by the words immediately following, "That all the world may become guilty before God." That is, that they may appear to be guilty, and stand convicted before God, and justly liable to the condemnation of his law, as guilty of death, according to the Jewish way of speaking.

And thus the apostle proves, that no flesh can be justified in God's sight by the deeds of the law; as he draws the conclusion in the following verse; and so prepares the way for the establishing of the great doctrine of justification by faith alone, which he proceeds to do in the next verse to that, and in the following part of the chapter, and of the epistle.

DOCTRINE.

"It is just with God eternally to cast off and destroy sinners."

.....For this is the punishment which the law condemns to; which the things that the law says, may well stop every mouth from all manner of objection against,

The truth of this doctrine may appear by the joint consideration of two things, viz. man's sinfulness, and God's sovereignty.

I. It appears from the consideration of man's sinfulness. And that whether we consider the infinitely evil nature of all sin, or how much sin men are guilty of.

1. If we consider the infinite evil and heinousness of sin in general, it is not unjust in God to inflict what punishment is deserved; because the very notion of deserving punishment is, that it may be justly inflicted: A deserved punishment and a just punishment are the same thing. To say that one deserves such a punishment, and yet to say that he does not justly deserve it, is a contradiction; and if he justly deserves it, then it may be justly inflicted.

Every crime or fault deserves a greater or less punishment, in proportion as the crime itself is greater or less. If any fault deserves punishment, then so much the greater the

fault, so much the greater is the punishment deserved. The faulty nature of any thing is the formal ground and reason of its desert of punishment; and therefore the more any thing hath of this nature, the more punishment it deserves. And therefore the terribleness of the degree of punishment, let it be never so terrible, is no argument against the justice of it, if the proportion does but hold between the heinousness of the crime and the dreadfulness of the punishment; so that if there be any such thing as a fault infinitely heinous, it will follow that it is just to inflict a punishment for it that is infinitely dreadful.

A crime is more or less heinous, according as we are under greater or less obligations to the contrary. This is selfevident; because it is herein that the criminalness or faultiness of any thing consists, that it is contrary to what we are obliged or bound to, or what ought to be in us. So the faultiness of one being's hating another, is in proportion to his obligation to love him. The crime of one being's despising and casting contempt on another, is proportionably more or less heinous, as he was under greater or less obligations to honor him. The fault of disobeying another, is greater or less, as any one is under greater or less obligations to obey him. And therefore if there be any being that we are under infinite obligations to love, and honor and obey, the contrary towards him must be infinitely faulty.

Our obligation to love, honor, and obey any being, is in proportion to his loveliness, honorableness, and authority; for that is the very meaning of the words. When we say any one is very lovely, it is the same as to say, that he is one very much to be loved: Or if we say such a one is more honorable than another, the meaning of the words is, that he is one that we are more obliged to honor. If we say any one has great authority over us, it is the same as to say, that he has great right to our subjection and obedience.

But God is a being infinitely lovely, because he hath infinite excellency and beauty. To have infinite excellency and beauty, is the same thing as to have infinite loveliness. He

is a Being of infinite greatness, majesty, and glory; and therefore is infinitely honorable. He is infinitely exalted above the greatest potentates of the earth, and highest angels in heaven; and therefore is infinitely more honorable than they. His authority over us is infinite; and the ground of his right to our obedience is infinitely strong; for he is infinitely worthy to be obeyed in himself, and we have an absolute, universal, and infinite dependance upon him.

So that sin against God, being a violation of infinite obligations, must be a crime infinitely heinous, and so deserving of infinite punishment.....Nothing is more agreeable to the common sense of mankind, than that sins committed against any one, must be heinous proportionably to the dignity of the being offended and abused; as it is also agreeable to the word of God, 1 Sam. ii. 25. "If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him;" (i. e. shall judge him, and inflict a finite punishment, such as finite judges can inflict); "but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him?" This was the aggravation of sin that made Joseph afraid of it, Gen. xxxix. 9. "How shall I commit this great wickedness, and sin against God?" This was the aggravation of David's sin, in comparison of which he esteemed all others as nothing, because they were infinitely exceeded by it. Psalm li. 4. "Against thee, thee only have I sinned."....The eternity of the punishment of ungodly men renders it infinite; and it renders it no more than infinite, and therefore renders no more than proportionable to the heinousness of what they are guilty.

If there be any evil or faultiness in sin against God, there is certainly infinite evil: For if it be any fault at all, it has an infinite aggravation, viz. that it is against an infinite object. If it be ever so small upon other accounts, yet if it be any thing, it has one infinite dimension; and so is an infinite evil. Which may be illustrated by this: If we suppose a thing to have infinite length, but no breadth and thickness, but to be only a mere mathematical line, it is nothing; but if it have any breadth and thickness at all, though never so small, yet if

it have but one infinite dimension, viz. that of length, the quantity of it is infinite; it exceeds the quantity of any thing, however broad, thick and long, wherein these dimensions are all finite.

So that the objections that are made against the infinite punishment of sin, from the necessity, or rather previous certainty of the futurition of sin, arising from the decree of God, or unavoidable original corruption of nature, if they argue any thing, do not argue against the infiniteness of the degree of the faultiness of sin directly, and no otherwise than they argue against any faultiness at all: For if this necessity or certainty leaves any evil at all in sin, that fault must be infinite by reason of the infinite object.

But every such objector as would argue from hence, that there is no fault at all in sin, confutes himself, and shews his own insincerity in his objection. For at the same time that he objects, that men's acts are necessary, from God's decrees, and original sin, and that this kind of necessity is inconsistent with faultiness in the act, his own practice shews that he does not believe what he objects to be true: Otherwise why does he at all blame men? Or why are such persons at all displeased with men, for abusive, injurious, and ungrateful acts towards them? Whatever they pretend, by this they shew that indeed they do believe that there is no necessity in men's acts, from divine decrees, or corruption of nature, that is inconsistent with blame. And if their objection be this, That this previous certainty is by God's own ordering, and that where God orders an antecedent certainty of acts, he transfers all the fault from the actor on himself; their practice shews, that at the same time they do not believe this, but fully believe the contrary: For when they are abused by men, they are displeased with men, and not with God only.

The light of nature teaches all mankind, that when an injury is voluntary, it is faulty, without any manner of consideration of what there might be previously to determine the futurition of that evil act of the will. And it really teaches this as much to those that object and cavil most as to others; as

their universal practice shews. By which it appears, that such objections are insincere and perverse. Men will mention other's corrupt nature in their own case, or when they are injured, as a thing that aggravates their crime, and that wherein their faultiness partly consists. How common is it for persons, when they look on themselves greatly injured by another, to inveigh against him, and aggravate his baseness, by saying, "He is a man of a most perverse spirit: He is naturally of a selfish, niggardly, or proud and haughty temper: He is one of a base and vile disposition." And yet men's natural, corrupt dispositions are mentioned as an excuse for them, with respect to their sins against God, and as if they rendered them blameless.

2. That it is just with God eternally to cast off wicked men; may more abundantly appear, if we consider how much sin they are guilty of. From what has been already said, it appears, that if men were guilty of sin but in one particular, that is sufficient ground of their eternal rejection and condemnation: If they are sinners, that is enough: Merely this might be sufficient to keep them from ever lifting up their heads, and cause them to smite on their breasts, with the publican that cried "God be merciful to me a sinner." But sinful men are not only thus, but they are full of sin; full of principles of sin, and full of acts of sin: Their guilt is like great mountains, heaped one upon another, till the pile is grown up to heaven. They are totally corrupt, in every part, in all their faculties, and all the principles of their nature, their understandings, and wills; and in all their dispositions and affections, their heads, their hearts, are totally depraved; all the members of their bodies are only instruments of sin; and all their senses, seeing, hearing, tasting, &c. are only inlets and outlets of sin, channels of corruption. There is nothing but sin, no good at all. Rom. vii. 18. "In me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good thing." There is all manner of wickedness. There are the seeds of the greatest and blackest crimes. There are principles of all sorts of wickedness against men; and there is all wickedness against God. There is pride; there is en-

mity; there is contempt; there is quarrelling; there is atheism; there is blasphemy. There are these things in exceeding strength; the heart is under the power of them, is sold under sin, and is a perfect slave to it. There is hardheartedness, hardness greater than that of a rock, or an adamant stone. There is obstinacy and perverseness, incorrigibleness and inflexibleness in sin, that will not be overcome by threatenings or promises, by awakenings or encouragements, by judgments or mercies, neither by that which is terrifying, nor that which is winning: The very blood of God will not win the heart of a wicked man.

And there is actual wickednesses without number or measure. There are breaches of every command, in thought, word, and deed; a life full of sin; days and nights filled up with sin; mercies abused, and frowns despised; mercy and justice, and all the divine perfections, trampled on; and the honor of each person in the Trinity trod in the dirt. Now if one sinful word or thought has so much evil in it, as to deserve eternal destruction, how do they deserve to be eternally cast off and destroyed, that are guilty of so much sin!

II. If with man's sinfulness, we consider God's sovereignty, it may serve further to clear God's justice in the eternal rejection and condemnation of sinners, from men's cavils and objections. I shall not now pretend to determine precisely, what things are, and what things are not, proper acts and exercises of God's holy sovereignty; but only, that God's sovereignty extends to the following things.

1. That such is God's sovereign power and right, that he is originally under no obligation to keep men from sinning; but may in his providence permit and leave them to sin. He was not obliged to keep either angels or men from falling. It is unreasonable to suppose, that God should be obliged, if he makes a reasonable creature capable of knowing his will, and receiving a law from him, and being subject to his moral government, at the same time to make it impossible for him to sin, or break his law. For if God be obliged to this, it destroys all use of any commands, laws, promises or threaten-

ings, and the very notion of any moral government of God over those reasonable creatures. For to what purpose would it be, for God to give such and such laws, and declare his holy will to a creature, and annex promises and threatenings to move him to his duty, and make him careful to perform it, if the creature at the same time has this to think of, that God is obliged to make it impossible for him to break his laws? How can God's threatenings move to care or watchfulness, when, at the same time, God is obliged to render it impossible that he should be exposed to the threatenings? Or, to what purpose is it for God to give a law at all? For, according to this supposition, it is God, and not the creature, that is under the law. It is the lawgiver's care, and not the subject's, to see that his law is obeyed; and this care is what the lawgiver is absolutely obliged to. If God be obliged never to permit a creature to fall, there is an end of all divine laws, or government, or authority of God over the creature; there can be no manner of use of these things.

God may permit sin, though the being of sin will certainly ensue on that permission: And so, by permission, he may dispose and order the event. If there were any such thing as chance, or mere contingence, and the very notion of it did not carry a gross absurdity, (as might easily be shown that it does) it would have been very unfit, that God should have left it to mere chance, whether man should fall or no. For, chance, if there should be any such thing, is undesigning and blind. And certainly it is more fit that an event of so great importance, and that is attended with such an infinite train of great consequences, should be disposed and ordered by infinite wisdom, than that it should be left to blind chance.

If it be said, that God need not have interposed to render it impossible for man to sin, and yet not leave it to mere contingence or blind chance neither; but might have left it with man's free will, to determine whether to sin or no: I answer, if God did leave it to man's free will, without any sort of disposal, or ordering in the case, whence it should be previously certain how that free will, should determine, then still the

first determination of the will must be merely contingent or by chance. It could not have any antecedent act of the will to determine it; for I speak now of the very first act or motion of the will, respecting the affair that may be looked upon as the prime ground and highest source of the event. To suppose this to be determined by a foregoing act is a contradiction. God's disposing this determination of the will by his permission, does not at all infringe the liberty of the creature: It is in no respect any more inconsistent with liberty, than mere chance or contingence. For if the determination of the will, be from blind, undesigning chance, it is no more from the agent himself, or from the will itself, than if we suppose, in the case, a wise, divine disposal by permission.

2. It was fit that it should be at the ordering of the divine wisdom and good pleasure, whether every particular man should stand for himself, or whether the first father of mankind should be appointed as the moral and federal head and representative of the rest. If God has not liberty in this matter to determine either of these two as he pleases, it must be because determining that the first father of men should represent the rest, and not that every one should stand for himself, is injurious to mankind. For if it be not injurious to mankind, how is it unjust? But it is not injurious to mankind; for there is nothing in the nature of the case itself, that makes it better for mankind that each man should stand for himself, than that all should be represented by their common father; as the least reflection or consideration will convince any one. And if there be nothing in the nature of the thing that makes the former better for mankind than the latter, then it will follow, that mankind are not hurt in God's choosing and appointing the latter, rather than the former; or, which is the same thing, that it is not injurious to mankind.

3. When men are fallen, and become sinful, God by his sovereignty has a right to determine about their redemption as he pleases. He has a right to determine whether he will redeem any or no. He might, if he had pleased, have left all to perish, or might have redeemed all. Or, he may redeem

some, and leave others; and if he doth so, he may take whom he pleases, and leave whom he pleases. To suppose that all have forfeited his favor, and deserved to perish, and to suppose that he may not leave any one individual of them to perish, implies a contradiction; because it supposes that such an one has a claim to God's favor, and is not justly liable to perish; which is contrary to the supposition.

It is meet that God should order all these things according to his own pleasure. By reason of his greatness and glory, by which he is infinitely above all, he is worthy to be sovereign, and that his pleasure should in all things take place: He is worthy that he should make himself his end, and that he should make nothing but his own wisdom his rule in pursuing that end, without asking leave or counsel of any, and without giving any account of any of his matters. It is fit that he that is absolutely perfect, and infinitely wise, and the fountain of all wisdom, should determine every thing by his own will, even things of the greatest importance, such as the eternal salvation or damnation of sinners. It is meet that he should be thus sovereign, because he is the first being, the eternal being, whence all other beings are. He is the Creator of all things; and all are absolutely and universally dependent on him; and therefore it is meet that he should act as the sovereign possessor of heaven and earth.

APPLICATION.

In the improvement of this doctrine, I would first direct myself to sinners that are afraid of damnation, in a use of conviction. This may be matter of conviction to you, that it would be just and righteous with God eternally to reject and destroy you. This is what you are in danger of: You that are a Christless sinner are a poor condemned creature: God's wrath still abides upon you; and the sentence of condemnation lies upon you: You are in God's hands, and it is uncertain what he will do with you. You are afraid what will become of you: You are afraid that it will be your portion to

suffer eternal burnings; and your fears are not without grounds; you have reason to tremble every moment. But let you be never so much afraid of it, let eternal damnation be never so dreadful, yet it is just: God may nevertheless do it, and be righteous, and holy, and glorious in it. Though eternal damnation be what you cannot bear, and how much soever your heart shrinks at the thoughts of it, yet God's justice may be glorious in it. The dreadfulness of the thing on your part, and the greatness of you dread of it, do not render it the less righteous on God's part. If you think otherwise, it is a sign that you do not see yourself, that you are not sensible what sin is, nor how much of it you have been guilty of.

Therefore for your conviction, be directed,

First, To look over your past life: Inquire at the mouth of conscience, and hear what that has to testify concerning it. Consider what you are, what light you have had, and what means you have lived under; and yet how have you behaved yourself! What have those many days and nights, that you have lived, been filled up with? How have those years, that have rolled over your heads, one after another, been spent? What has the sun shone upon you for, from day to day, while you have improved his light to serve Satan by it? What has God kept your breath in your nostrils for, and given you meat and drink, from day to day for, that you have spent that life and strength that have been supported by them, in opposing God and rebellion against him?

How many sorts of wickedness have you been guilty of? How manifold have been the abominations of your life? What profaneness and contempt of God has been exercised by you? How little regard have you had to the scriptures, to the word preached, to sabbaths, and sacraments? How profanely have you talked, many of you about those things that are holy? After what manner have many of you kept God's holy day, not regarding the holiness of the time, not caring what you thought of in it? Yea, you have not only spent the time in worldly, vain and unprofitable thoughts, but in immoral thoughts; pleasing yourself with the reflection of past acts of wickedness,

and in contriving new acts. Have not you spent much holy time in gratifying your lusts in your imaginations; yea, not only holy time, but the very time of God's public worship, when you have appeared in God's more immediate presence? How have you not only not attended to the worship, but have in the mean time been feasting your lusts, and wallowing yourself in abominable uncleanness? How many sabbaths have you spent, one after another, in a most wretched manner? Some of you not only in worldly and wicked thoughts, but also a very wicked outward behavior! When you on sabbath days have got along with your wicked companions, how has holy time been treated among you! What kind of conversation has there been! Yea, how have some of you, by a very indecent carriage, openly dishonored and cast contempt on the sacred services of God's house, and holy day! And what you have done some of you alone, what wicked practices there have been in secret, even in holy time, God and your own consciences know.

And how have you behaved yourself in the time of family prayer! And what a trade have many of you made of absenting yourselves from the worship of the families you belong to, for the sake of vain company! And how have you continued in the neglect of secret prayer! Wherein wilfully living in a known sin, going abreast against as plain a command as any in the Bible! Have you not been one that has cast off fear, and restrained prayer before God?

What wicked carriage have some of you been guilty of towards your parents! How far have you been from paying that honor to them that God has required! Have you not even harbored ill will and malice towards them? And when they have displeased you, have wished evil to them? Yea and shown your vile spirit in your behavior? And it is well if you have not mocked them behind their backs; and like the cursed Ham and Canaan, derided your parents' nakedness instead of covering it, and hiding your eyes from it. Have not some of you often disobeyed your parents, yea, and refused to be subject to them? It is a wonder of mercy and forbearance,

that that has not before now been accomplished on you, Prov. xxxi. 17. "The eye that mocketh at his father, and refuseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it."

What revenge and malice have you been guilty of towards your neighbors? How have you indulged this spirit of the devil, hating others, and wishing evil to them, rejoicing when evil befel them, and grieving at others' prosperity, and lived in such a way for a long time! Have not some of you allowed a passionate, furious spirit, and behaved yourselves in your anger, more like wild beasts than like Christians!

What covetousness has been in many of you? Such has been your inordinate love of the world, and care about the things of it, that it has taken up your heart; you have allowed no room for God and religion; you have minded the world more than your eternal salvation. For the vanities of the world you have neglected reading, praying and meditation: For the things of the world, you have broken the sabbath: For the world you have spent a great deal of your time in quarrelling: For the world you have envied and hated your neighbor: For the world you have cast God, and Christ, and heaven, behind your back: For the world you have sold your own soul: You have, as it were, drowned your soul in worldly cares and desires: You have been a mere earthworm, that is never in its element but when grovelling and buried in the earth.

How much of a spirit of pride has appeared in you, which is in a peculiar manner the spirit and condemnation of the devil! How have some of you vaunted yourselves in your apparel! Others in their riches! Others in their knowledge and abilities! How has it galled you to see others above you! How much has it gone against the grain for you to give others their due honor! And how have you shown your pride by setting up your wills, and in opposing others and stirring up and promoting division, and a party spirit in public affairs!

How sensual have you been! Are there not some here that have debased themselves below the dignity of human na-

ture, by wallowing in sensual filthiness, as swine in the mire, or as filthy vermin feeding with delight on rotten carrion? What intemperance have some of you been guilty of! How much of your precious time have you spent at the tavern, and in drinking companies, when you ought to have been at home seeking God and your salvation in your families and closets!

And what abominable lasciviousness have some of you been guilty of! How have you indulged yourself from day to day, and from night to night, in all manner of unclean imaginations! Has not your soul been filled with them, till it has become an hold of foul spirits, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird? What foul mouthed persons have some of you been, often in lewd and lascivious talk and unclean songs, wherein were things not fit to be spoken! And such company, where such conversation has been carried on, has been your delight. And what unclean acts and practices have you defiled yourself with! God and your own consciences know what abominable lasciviousness you have practised in things not fit to be named, when you have been alone; when you ought to have been reading or meditating, or on your knees before God in secret prayer. And how have you corrupted others, as well as polluted yourselves! What vile uncleanness have you practised in company! What abominations have you been guilty of in the dark! Such as the apostle doubtless had respect to in Eph. v. 1, 2. "For it is a shame even to speak of those things that are done of them in secret." Some of you have corrupted others, and done what in you lay to undo their souls, (if you have not actually done it); and by your vile practices and examples have made room for Satan, and invited his presence, and established his interest, in the town where you have lived.

What lying have some of you been guilty of, especially in childhood! And have not your heart and lips often disagreed since you came to riper years? What fraud, and deceit, and unfaithfulness, have many of you practised in your dealings with your neighbors that your own heart is conscious to, if you have not been noted for it by others!

And how have some of you behaved yourselves in your family relations! How have you neglected your children's souls! And not only so, but have corrupted their minds by your bad examples; and instead of training them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, have rather brought them up in the devil's service!

How have some of you attended that sacred ordinance of the Lord's supper without any manner of serious preparation, and in a careless, slighty frame of spirit, and chiefly to comply with custom! Have you not ventured to put the sacred symbols of the body and blood of Christ into your mouth, while at the same time you lived in ways of known sins, and intended no other than still to go on in the same wicked practices? And, it may be, have sat at the Lord's table with rancor in your heart against some of your brethren that you have sat there with. You have come even to that holy feast of love among God's children, with the leaven of malice and envy in your heart; and so have eat and drank judgment to yourself.

What stupidity and sottishness has attended your course of wickedness; which has appeared in your obstinacy under awakening dispensations of God's word and providence. And how have some of you backslidden after you have set out in religion, and quenched God's Spirit after he had been striving with you! And what unsteadiness, and slothfulness, and great misimprovement of God's strivings with you, have you been chargeable with, that having long been subjects of them?

Now, can you think when you have thus behaved yourself, that God is obliged to shew you mercy? Are you not, after all this, ashamed to talk of its being hard with God to cast you off? Does it become one that has lived such a life, to open his mouth to excuse himself, or object against God's justice in his condemnation, or to complain of it as hard in God not to give him converting and pardoning grace, and make him his child, and bestow on him eternal life! Or to talk of his duties and great pains in religion, and such like things, as if such performances were worthy to be accepted, and to draw God's heart to such a creature! If this has been your manner, does it not

shew how little you have considered yourself, and how little a sense you have had of your own sinfulness?

Secondly, Be directed to consider, if God should eternally reject and destroy you what an agreeableness and exact mutual answerableness there would be between God's so dealing with you, and your spirit and behavior. There would not only be an equality, but a similitude. God declares, that his dealings with men shall be suitable to their disposition and practice. Psalm xviii. 25, 26. "With the merciful man, thou wilt shew thyself merciful: With an upright man, thou wilt shew thyself upright: With the pure, thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward, thou wilt shew thyself froward." How much soever you dread damnation, and are affrighted and concerned at the thoughts of it; yet if God should indeed eternally damn you, you would but be met with in your own way; you would be dealt with exactly according to your own dealing: God would but measure to you in the same measure in which you mete. Surely it is but fair that you should be made to buy in the same measure in which you sell.

Here I would particularly shew, 1. That if God should eternally destroy you, it would be agreeable to your treatment of God. 2. That it would be agreeable to your treatment of Jesus Christ. 3. That it would be agreeable to your behavior towards your neighbors. 4. That it would be according to your own foolish behavior towards yourself.

I. If God should forever cast you off, it would be exactly agreeable to your treatment of him. That you may be sensible of this, consider,

1. You never have exercised the least degree of love to God; and therefore it would be agreeable to your treatment of him if he should never express any love to you. When God converts and saves a sinner, it is a wonderful and unspeakable manifestation of divine love. When a poor lost soul is brought home to Christ, and has all his sins forgiven him, and is made a child of God, it will take up a whole eternity to express and declare the greatness of that love.

And why should God be obliged to express such wonderful love to you, who never exercised the least degree of love to him in all your life? You never have loved God, who is infinitely glorious and lovely; and why then is God under obligation to love you who are all over deformed and loathsome as a filthy worm, or rather a hateful viper? You have no benevolence in your heart towards God; you never rejoiced in God's happiness; if he had been miserable, and that had been possible, you would have liked it as well as if he were happy; you would not have cared how miserable he was, nor mourned for it, any more than you now do for the devil's being miserable: And why then should God be looked upon as obliged to take so much care for your happiness, as to do such great things for it, as he doth for those that are saved? Or why should God be called hard, in case he should not be careful to save you from misery? You care not what becomes of God's glory; you are not distressed how much soever his honor seems to suffer in the world: And why should God care any more for your welfare? Has it not been so, that if you could but promote your private interest, and gratify your own lusts, you cared not how much the glory of God suffered? And why may not God advance his own glory in the ruin of your welfare, not caring how much your interest suffers by it? You never so much as stirred one step, sincerely making the glory of God your end, or acting from real respect to him: And why then is it hard if God do not do such great things for you, as the changing your nature, raising you from spiritual death to life, conquering the powers of darkness for you, translating you out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son, delivering you from eternal misery, and bestowing eternal glory upon you? You do not use to be willing to deny yourself for God; you never cared to put yourself out of your way for Christ: Whenever any thing cross or difficult came in your way, that the glory of God was concerned in, it has been your manner to shun it, and excuse yourself from it: You did not care to hurt yourself for Christ, that you did not see worthy of it: And why then must it be looked upon as

such a hard and cruel thing, if Christ has not been pleased to spill his blood and be tormented to death for such a sinner.

2. You have slighted and made light of God; and why then may not God justly slight you? When sinners are sensible in some measure of their misery, they are ready to think it hard that God will not take more notice of them; that he will see them in such a lamentable distressed condition, beholding their burdens and tears, and seem to slight it, and manifest no pity to them. Their souls they think are precious: It would be a dreadful thing if they should perish, and burn in hell for ever. They do not see through it, that God should make so light of their salvation. But then, ought they not to consider, that as their souls are precious, so is God's honor precious? The honor of the infinite God, the great King of heaven and earth, is a thing of as great importance, (and surely may justly be so esteemed by God) as the happiness of you, a poor little worm. But yet you have slighted that honor of God, and valued it no more than the dirt under your feet. You have been told that such and such things were contrary to the will of an holy God, and against his honor; but you cared not for that. God called upon you, and exhorted you to be more tender of his honor; but you went on without regarding him. Thus have you slighted God! And yet, is it hard that God should slight you? Are you more honorable than God, that he must be obliged to make much of you, how light soever you make of him and his glory?

And you have not only slighted God in time past, but you slight him still. You indeed now make a pretence and shew of honoring him in your prayers, and attendance on other external duties, and by a sober countenance, and seeming devoutness in your words and behavior; but it is all mere dissembling. That downcast look and seeming reverence, is not from any honor you have to God in your heart, though you would have it go so, and would have God take it so. You that have not believed in Christ, have not the least jot of honor to God; that shew of it is merely forced and what you are driven to by fear, like those mentioned in Psalm lxvi. 3. "Through

the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves to thee." In the original it is, "shall lie unto thee;" that is, yield feigned submission, and dissemble respect and honor to thee. There is a rod held over you that makes you seem to pay such respect to God. This religion and devotion, even the very appearance of it, would soon be gone, and all vanish away, if that were removed. Sometimes it may be you weep in your prayers, and in your hearing sermons, and hope God will take notice of it, and take it for some honor; but he sees it to be all hypocrisy. You weep for yourself; you are afraid of hell; and do you think that that is worthy that God should take much notice of you, because you can cry when you are in danger of being damned; when at the same time you indeed care nothing for God's honor?

Seeing you thus disregard so great a God, is it a heinous thing for God to slight you, a little wretched, despicable creature; a worm, a mere nothing, and less than nothing; a vile insect, that has risen up in contempt against the Majesty of heaven and earth?

3. Why should God be looked upon as obliged to bestow salvation upon you, when you have been so ungrateful for the mercies he has bestowed upon you already? God has tried you with a great deal of kindness, and he never has sincerely been thanked by you for any of it. God has watched over you and preserved you, and provided for you, and followed you with mercy all your days; and yet you have continued sinning against him. He has given you food and raiment, but you have improved both in the service of sin. He has preserved you while you slept; but when you arose, it was to return to the old trade of sinning. God, notwithstanding this ingratitude, has still continued his mercy; but his kindness has never won your heart, or brought you to a more grateful behavior towards him. It may be you have received many remarkable mercies, recoveries from sickness, or preservations of your life, when at one time and another exposed by accidents, when, if you had died, you would have gone directly to hell: But you never had any true thankfulness for any of these mercies. God has kept you out of hell, and con-

tinued your day of grace, and the offers of salvation, this so long a time; and that, it may be, while you did not regard your own salvation so much as to go in secret and ask God for it: And now God has greatly added to his mercy to you, by giving you the strivings of his Spirit, whereby you have a most precious opportunity for your salvation in your hands. But what thanks has God received for it? What kind of returns have you made for all this kindness? As God has multiplied mercies, so have you multiplied provocations.

And yet now are you ready to quarrel for mercy, and to find fault with God, not only that he does not bestow more mercy, but to contend with him, because he does not bestow infinite mercy upon you, heaven with all it contains, and even himself, for your eternal portion. What ideas have you of yourself, that you think God is obliged to do so much for you, though you treat him so ungratefully for his kindness that you have been followed with all the days of your life?

4. You have voluntarily chosen to be with Satan in his enmity and opposition to God; how justly therefore might you be with him in his punishment? You did not choose to be on God's side, but rather chose to side with the devil, and have obstinately continued in it, against God's often repeated calls and counsels. You have chosen rather to hearken to Satan than to God, and would be with him in his work: You have given yourself up to him, to be subject to his power and government, in opposition to God. How justly therefore may God also give you up to him, and leave you in his power, to accomplish your ruin? Seeing you have yielded yourself to his will, to do as he would have you, surely God may leave you in his hands to execute his will upon you. If men will be with God's enemy, and on his side, why is God obliged to redeem them out of his hands, when they have done his work? Doubtless you would be glad to serve the devil, and be God's enemy while you live, and then to have God your friend, and to deliver you from the devil, when you come to die. But will God be unjust if he deals otherwise by you? No surely! It will be altogether and perfectly just, that you should have

your portion with him with whom you have chosen your work; and that you should be in his possession to whose dominion you have yielded yourself; and if you cry to God for deliverance, he may most justly give you that answer, Judges, x. 14, "Go to the gods which ye have chosen."

5. Consider how often you have refused to hear God's calls to you, and how just it would therefore be, if he should refuse to hear you when you call upon him. You are ready, it may be, to complain that you have often prayed, and earnestly begged of God to shew you mercy, and yet have no answer of prayer: One says, I have been constant in prayer for so many years, and God has not heard me. Another says, I have done what I can; I have prayed as earnestly as I am able; I do not see how I can do more; and it will seem hard if after all I am denied. But do you consider how often God has called, and you have denied him? God has called earnestly and for a long time; he has called, and called again in his word, and in his providence, and you have refused. You was not uneasy for fear you should not shew regard enough to his calls. You let him call as loud, and as long as he would; for your part, you had no leisure to attend to what he said; you had other business to mind; you had these and those lusts to gratify and please, and worldly lusts to attend; you could not afford to stand considering of what God had to say to you. When the ministers of Christ that he sent on that errand, have stood and pleaded with you, in his name, Sabbath after Sabbath, and have even spent their strength in it, how little was you moved by it! It did not alter you, but you went on still as you used to do; when you went away, you returned again to your sins, to your lasciviousness, to your vain mirth, to your covetousness, to your intemperance, and that has been the language of your heart and practice. Exod. v. 2. "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?" Was it no crime for you to refuse to hear when God called? And yet is it now very hard that God does not hear your earnest calls, and that though your calling on God be not from any respect to him, but merely from selflove? The devil would beg as earnestly

as you, if he had any hope to get salvation by it, and a thousand times as earnestly and yet be as much of a devil as he is now. Are your calls more worthy to be heard than God's? Or is God more obliged to regard what you say to him, than you to regard his commands, counsels and invitations to you? What can have more justice in it than that in Prov. i. 24, &c. "Because I have called, and ye have refused, I stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; "but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I will also laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."

6. Have you not taken encouragement to sin against God, on that very presumption, that God would show you mercy when you sought it? And may not God justly refuse you that mercy that you have so presumed upon? That has been what you have flattered yourself with, and that which has made you bold to disobey God, viz. that though you did so, yet God would shew you mercy when you cried earnestly to him for it: How righteous therefore would it be in God, to disappoint such a wicked presumption? It was upon that very hope that you dared to affront the Majesty of heaven so dreadfully as you have done; and can you now be so sottish as to think that God is obliged not to frustrate that hope?

When a sinner takes encouragement to neglect that secret prayer that God has commanded, and to gratify his lusts, and to live a carnal and vain life, and thwart God, and run upon him, and contemn him to his face, thinking with himself, "If I do so, God would not damn me; he is a merciful God, and therefore when I seek his mercy he will bestow it upon me;" must God be accounted hard because he will not do according to such a sinner's presumption? Cannot he be excused from showing such a sinner mercy when he is pleased to seek it, without incurring the charge of being unjust? If this be the case, God has no liberty to vindicate his own honor and maj-

esty; but must lay himself open to all manner of affronts, and yield himself up to the abuses of vile men, and let them disobey, despise and dishonor him, as much as they will; and when they have done, his mercy and pardoning grace must not be in his own power and at his own disposal, but he must be obliged to dispense it at their call: He must take these bold and vile contemners of his majesty, when it suits them to ask it, and must forgive all their sins, and not only so, but must adopt them into his family, and make them his children, and bestow eternal glory upon them. What mean, low and strange thoughts have such men of God, as think thus of him?

Consider that you have injured God the more, and have been the worse enemy to him, for his being a merciful God. So have you treated that attribute of God's mercy! How just is it therefore that you never should have any benefit of that attribute!

There is something peculiarly heinous in sinning against the mercy of God more than other attributes. There is such base and horrid ingratitude, in being the worse to God, because he is a being of infinite goodness and grace, that it above all things renders wickedness vile and detestable. This ought to win us, and engage us to serve God better; but instead of that, to sin against him the more, has something inexpressibly bad in it, and does in a peculiar manner enhance guilt, and incense wrath; as seems to be intimated in Rom. ii. 4, 5. "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

The greater the mercy of God is, the more should you be engaged to love him, and live to his glory. But it has been contrariwise with you; the consideration of the mercies of God being so exceeding great, is the thing wherewith you have encouraged yourself in sin. You have heard that the mercy of God was without bounds, that it was sufficient to pardon the greatest sinner, and you have upon that very ac-

count ventured to be a very great sinner. Though it was very offensive to God, though you heard that God infinitely hated sin, and that such practices as you went on in were exceeding contrary to his nature, will and glory, yet that did not make you uneasy; you heard that he was a very merciful God, and had grace enough to pardon you, and so cared not how offensive your sins were to him. How long have some of you gone on in sin, and what great sins have some of you been guilty of, on that presumption! Your own conscience can give testimony to it, that this has made you refuse God's calls, and has made you regardless of his repeated commands. Now, how righteous would it be if God should swear in his wrath, that you should never be the better for his being infinitely merciful!

Your ingratitude has been the greater, that you have not only abused the attribute of God's mercy, taking encouragement from it to continue in sin, but you have thus abused this mercy, under that very notion of its being exercised towards you, in a supposition that God would exercise infinite mercy to you in particular; which consideration should have especially endeared God to you. You have taken encouragement to sin the more, from that consideration, that Christ came into the world and died to save sinners; that thanks has Christ had from you, for enduring such a tormenting death for his enemies! Now, how justly might it be so, that God should refuse that you should ever be the better for his Son's laying down his life! It was because of these things that you put off seeking salvation: You would take the pleasure of sin still longer, hardening yourself with that, that mercy was infinite, and it would not be too late if you sought it afterwards; now, how justly may God disappoint you in this, and order it so that it shall be too late!

7. How have some of you risen up against God, and in the frame of your minds opposed him in his sovereign dispensations! And how justly upon that account might God oppose you, and set himself against you! You never yet would submit to God; never could willingly comply with it, that

God should have dominion over the world, and that he should govern it for his own glory, according to his own wisdom. You, a poor worm, a potsherd, a broken piece of an earthen vessel, have dared to find fault and quarrel with God. Isa. xlv. 9. "Wo to him that strives with his maker. Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth: Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou?" But yet you have ventured to do it. Rom. ix. 20. "Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?" But yet you have thought you was big enough; you have taken upon you to call God to an account, why he does thus and thus; you have said to Jehovah, What dost thou?

If you have been restrained by fear from openly venting your opposition and enmity of heart against God's government, yet it has been in you: You have not been quiet in the frame of your mind; you had the heart of a viper within, and have been ready to spit venom at God; and it is well if sometimes you have not actually done it, by tolerating blasphemous thoughts and malignant risings of heart against him; yea, and the frame of your heart in some measure appeared in an impatient and fretful behavior.

Now, seeing you have thus opposed God, how just is it that God should oppose you? Or is it because you are so much better, and so much greater than God, that it is a crime for God to make that opposition against you that you do against him?* Do you think you ought to appropriate the liberty of making opposition to yourself as being your prerogative, so that you may be an enemy to God, but God must by no means be an enemy to you, but must be looked upon under obligation nevertheless to help you, and save you by his blood, and bestow his best blessings upon you?

Consider how in the frame of your mind you have thwarted God in those very exercises of mercy towards others that

* The reader will not understand from this manner of speaking, that Mr. Edwards would be understood to say, that God has at any time, or in any view, the same moral feelings towards the sinner, that the sinner has towards him.

you are seeking for yourself. God's exercising his infinite grace towards your neighbors, has put you into an ill frame, and it may be, set you into a mere tumult of mind: How justly therefore may God refuse ever to exercise that mercy towards you! Have you not thus opposed God's shewing mercy to others, even at the very time when you pretended to be earnest with God for pity and help for yourself? Yea, and while you was endeavoring to get something wherewith to recommend yourself to God? And will you look to God still with a challenge of mercy, and contend with him for it notwithstanding? Can you who have such an heart, and have thus behaved yourself, come to God for any other than mere sovereign mercy?

II. If you should be forever cast off by God, it would be agreeable to your treatment of Jesus Christ. It would have been just with God if he had cast you off forever, without ever making you the offer of a Saviour. But God hath not done that, but has provided a Saviour for sinners, and offered him to you, even his own Son Jesus Christ, who is the only Saviour of men: All that be not forever cast off are saved by him: God offers men salvation through him, and has promised us, that if we come to him, we shall not be cast off. But you have treated, and still treat this Saviour after such a manner, that if you should be eternally cast off by God, it would be most agreeable to your behavior towards him; which appears by this, viz.

"That you reject Christ, and will not have him for your Saviour."

If God offers you a Saviour from deserved punishment, and you will not receive him, then surely it is just that you should go without a Saviour. Or is God obliged, because you do not like this Saviour, to provide you another? If, when he has given an infinitely honorable and glorious person, even his only begotten Son, to be a sacrifice for sin, in the fire of his wrath, and so provided salvation, and this Saviour is offered to you, you be not suited in him, and refuse to accept him, is God therefore unjust if he does not save you? Is he obliged

to save you in a way of your own choosing, because you do not like the way of his choosing? Or will you charge Christ with injustice because he does not become your Saviour, when at the same time you will not have him when he offers himself to you, and beseeches you to accept of him as a Saviour?

I am sensible that by this time many persons are ready to open their mouths in objection against this. If all should speak what they now think, we should hear murmuring all over the meetinghouse, and one and another would say, "I cannot see how this can be, that I be not willing that Christ should be my Saviour, when I would give all the world that he was my Saviour: How is it possible that I should not be willing to have Christ for my Saviour, when this is what I am seeking after, and praying for, and striving for, as for my life?"

Here therefore I would endeavor to convince you, that you are under a gross mistake in this matter. And, 1st, I would endeavor to shew the weakness of the grounds of your mistake. And 2dly, To demonstrate to you, that you have rejected, and do wilfully reject Jesus Christ.

1. That you may see the weakness of the grounds of your mistake, consider,

1st, There is a great deal of difference between a willingness not to be damned, and a being willing to receive Christ for your Saviour. You have the former; there is no doubt to be made of that: No body supposes that you love misery so well as to choose an eternity of it; and so doubtless you are willing to be saved from eternal misery. But that is a very different thing from being willing to come to Christ: Persons very commonly mistake the one for the other, but they are quite two things. You may love the deliverance, but hate the deliverer. You tell of a willingness; but consider what is the object of that willingness: It does not respect Christ; the way of salvation by him is not at all the object of it; but it is wholly terminated on your escape from misery. The inclination of your will goes no further than self, it never reaches Christ. You are willing not to be miserable; that is, you love yourself, and there your will and choice terminate. And it is but

a vain pretence and delusion to say or think, that you are willing to accept of Christ.

2d, There is certainly a great deal of difference between a forced compliance and a free willingness. Force and freedom cannot consist together. Now that willingness that you tell of, whereby you think you are willing to have Christ for a Saviour, is merely a forced thing. Your heart does not go out after Christ of itself, but you are forced and driven to seek an interest in him. Christ has no share at all in your heart; there is no manner of closing of the heart with him. This forced compliance is not what Christ seeks of you; he seeks a free and willing acceptance, Psalm cx. 3. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." He seeks not that you should receive him against your will, but with a free will. He seeks entertainment in your heart and choice.....And,

If you refuse thus to receive Christ, how just is it that Christ should refuse to receive you? How reasonable are Christ's terms, who offers to save all those that willingly, or with a good will, accept of him for their Saviour! Who can rationally expect that Christ should force himself upon any man to be his Saviour? Or what can be looked for more reasonable, than that all that would be saved by Christ, should heartily and freely entertain him? And surely it would be very dishonorable for Christ to offer himself upon lower terms.

But I would now proceed,

2. To shew that it is really so, that you are not willing to have Christ for a Saviour. To convince you of it, consider,

1st, How impossible it is that you should be willing to accept of Christ as a Saviour from the desert of a punishment that you are not sensible you have deserved. If you are truly willing to accept of Christ as a Saviour, it must be as a sacrifice to make atonement for your guilt: Christ came into the world on this errand, to offer himself as an atonement, to answer for our desert of punishment. But how is it possible that you should be willing to accept of Christ as an atonement for that guilt that you be not sensible that you have? How can

you be willing to have Christ for a Saviour from a desert of hell if you be not sensible that you have a desert of hell? If you have not really deserved everlasting burnings in hell, then the very offer of an atonement for such a desert is an imposition upon you. If you have no such guilt upon you, then the very offer of a satisfaction for that guilt is an injury, because it implies in it a charge of guilt that you are free from. Now therefore, it is impossible that a man that is not convinced of his guilt can be willing to accept of an offer; because he cannot be willing to accept the charge that the offer implies: That he looks upon as injurious. A man that is not convinced that he has deserved so dreadful a punishment, cannot willingly submit to be charged with it; if he think he is willing, it is but a mere forced, feigned, business; because in his heart he looks upon himself greatly injured; and therefore he cannot freely accept of Christ, under that notion of a Saviour from that guilt, and from the desert of such a punishment; for such an acceptance is an implicit owning that he does deserve such a punishment.

I do not say, but that men may be willing to be saved from an undeserved punishment; they may rather not suffer it than suffer it: But a man cannot be willing to accept one at God's hands, under the notion of a Saviour from a punishment deserved from him that he thinks he has not deserved; it is impossible that any one should freely allow a Saviour under that notion. Such an one cannot like the way of salvation by Christ; for if he thinks he has not deserved hell, then he will think that freedom from hell is a debt; and therefore cannot willingly and heartily receive it as a free gift. If a king should condemn a man to some exceeding tormenting death, which the condemned person thought himself not deserving of, but looked upon the sentence unjust and cruel, and the king, when the time of execution drew nigh, should offer him his pardon, under the notion of a very great act of grace and clemency, the condemned person never could willingly and heartily allow it under that notion, because he judged himself unjustly condemned.

Now by this it is evident that you are not willing to accept of Christ as your Saviour; because you never yet had such a sense of your own sinfulness, and such a conviction of your great guilt in God's sight as to be indeed convinced that you lay justly condemned to the punishment of hell. You never was convinced that you had forfeited all favor, and was in God's hands, and at his sovereign and arbitrary disposal, to be either destroyed or saved, just as he pleased. You never yet was convinced of the sovereignty of God. Hence are there so many objections arising against the justice of your punishment from original sin, and from God's decrees, from mercy shown to others, and the like.

2*d*, That you be not sincerely willing to accept of Christ as your Saviour, appears by this, That you never have been convinced that he is sufficient for the work of your salvation. You never had a sight or sense of any such excellency or worthiness in Christ, as should give such great value to his blood and his mediation with God, as that it was sufficient to be accepted for such exceeding guilty creatures, and those that have so provoked God, and exposed themselves to such amazing wrath. A saying it is so, and a customary yielding and allowing it to be as others say, is a very different thing from being really convinced of it, and a being made sensible of it in your own heart. The sufficiency of Christ depends upon, or rather consists in his excellency. It is because he is so excellent a person that his blood is of sufficient value to atone for sin, and it is hence that his obedience is so worthy in God's sight; it is also hence that his intercession is so prevalent; and therefore those that never had any spiritual sight or sense of Christ's excellency, cannot be sensible of his sufficiency.

And that sinners be not convinced that Christ is sufficient for the work he has undertaken, appears most manifestly when they are under great convictions of their sin, and danger of God's wrath. Though it may be before they thought they could allow Christ to be sufficient, (for it is easy to allow any one to be sufficient for our defence at a time when we see no danger) yet when they come to be sensible of their guilt and

God's wrath, what discouraging thoughts do they entertain! How are they ready to draw towards despair, as if there were no hope or help for such wicked creatures as they! The reason is, They have no apprehension or sense of any other way that God's majesty can be vindicated, but only in their misery. To tell them of the blood of Christ signifies nothing, it does not relieve their sinking, despairing hearts. This makes it most evident that they are not convinced that Christ is sufficient to be their Mediator.

And as long as they are unconvinced of this, it is impossible they should be willing to accept of him as their Mediator and Saviour. A man in distressing fear will not willingly betake himself to a fort that he judges not sufficient to defend him from the enemy. A man will not willingly venture out into the ocean in a ship that he suspects is leaky, and will sink before he gets through his voyage.

3*d*, It is evident that you are not willing to have Christ for your Saviour, because you have so mean an opinion of him, that you durst not trust his faithfulness. One that undertakes to be the Saviour of Souls had need be faithful; for if he fails in such a trust, how great is the loss! But you are not convinced of Christ's faithfulness; as is evident, because at such times as when you are in a considerable measure sensible of your guilt and God's anger, you cannot be convinced that Christ is willing to accept of you or that he stands ready to receive you if you should come to him, though Christ so much invites you to come to him, and has so fully declared that he will not reject you, if you do come; as particularly, John vi. 37. "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Now, there is no man can be heartily willing to trust his eternal welfare in the hands of an unfaithful person, or one whose faithfulness he suspects.

4*th*, You are not willing to be saved in that way by Christ, as is evident, because you are not willing that your own goodness should be set at nought. In the way of salvation by Christ, men's own goodness is wholly set at nought; there is no account at all made of it. Now you cannot be willing to be

saved in a way wherein your own goodness is set at nought, as is evident by that, that you make much of it yourself. You make much of your prayers and pains in religion, and are often thinking of them; how considerable do they appear to you, when you look back upon them! And how much are some of you in thinking how much more you have done than some others, and in expecting some respect or regard that God should manifest to what you do? Now, if you make so much of what you do yourself, it is impossible that you should be freely willing that God should make nothing of it. As we may see in other things; if a man is proud of a great estate, or if he values himself much upon his honorable office, or his great abilities, it is impossible that he should like it, and heartily approve of it, that others should make light of these things and despise them.

Seeing therefore that it is so evident that you refuse to accept of Christ as your Saviour, why is Christ to be blamed that he does not save you? Christ has offered himself to you to be your Saviour in time past, and he continues offering himself still, and you continue to reject him, and yet complain that he does not save you.....So strangely unreasonable, and inconsistent with themselves, are gospel sinners!

But I expect that there are many of you that in your hearts still object; your mouths be not stopped.....Such an objection as this, is probably now in the hearts of many here present.

Object. If it be so, that I am not willing to have Christ for my Saviour, yet I cannot make myself willing.

But I would give an answer to this objection by laying down two things, that must be acknowledged to be exceeding evident.

1. It is no excuse, that you cannot receive Christ of yourself, unless you would if you could. This is so evident of itself, that it scarce needs any proof. Certainly if persons would not if they could, it is just the same thing as to the blame that lies upon them, whether they can or cannot. If you were willing, and then found that you could not, your being unable would alter the case, and might be some excuse;

because then the defect would not be in your will, but only in your ability: But as long as you will not, it is no matter what the ability is, whether you have ability or no ability.

If you be not willing to accept of Christ, it will follow that you have no sincere willingness to be willing; because the will always necessarily approves of, and rests in its own acts. To suppose the contrary would be to suppose a contradiction; it would be to suppose that a man's will is contrary to itself, or that he wills contrary to what he himself wills. So that as you are not willing to come to Christ, and cannot make yourself willing, so you have no sincere desire to be willing; and therefore may most justly perish without a Saviour. There is no excuse at all for you; for say what you will about your inability, the seat of your blame lies in your perverse will, that is an enemy to the Saviour. It is in vain for you to tell of your want of power, as long as your will is found defective. If a man should hate you, and devour you, and exalt himself and smite you in the face, and tell you that he did it voluntarily, and because he had a mind to, but only should tell you at the same time, that he hated you so much, that he could not help choosing and willing so to do, would you take it the more patiently for that? Would not your indignation be rather stirred up the more?

2. If you would be willing if you could, that is no excuse, unless your unwillingness to be willing be sincere. That which is hypocritical, and does not come from the heart, but is merely forced, ought wholly to be set aside, as worthy of no consideration; and that because common sense teaches, that that which is not hearty but hypocritical is indeed nothing, being only a shew of what is not; but that which is good for nothing, ought to go for nothing. But if you set aside all that is not free, and call nothing a willingness, but a free hearty willingness, then see how the case stands, and whether or no you have not lost all your excuse for standing out against the calls of the gospel. You say you would make yourself willing to accept if you could; but it is not from any good principle that you are willing for that; it is not from any free inclination,

or true respect to Christ, or any love to your duty, or any spirit of obedience, or from the influence of any manner of real respect, or tendency in your heart, towards any thing that is good, or from any other principle than such as is in the hearts of devils, and would make them have the same sort of willingness in the same circumstances. It is therefore evident, that there can be no goodness in that woulding to be willing to come to Christ: And that which has no goodness cannot be an excuse for any badness. If there be no good in it, then it signifies nothing, and weighs nothing, when put into the scales to counterbalance that which is bad.

Sinners therefore spend their time in foolish arguing and objecting, making much of that which is good for nothing, making those excuses that be not worth offering. It is in vain to keep making objections: You stand justly condemned: The blame lies all at your door: Thrust it off from you as often as you will, it will return upon you: Sew fig leaves as you will, your nakedness will appear: You continue wilfully and wickedly rejecting Jesus Christ, and will not have him for your Saviour, and therefore it is sottish madness in you to charge Christ with injustice that he does not save you.

Here is the sin of unbelief! Thus the guilt of that great sin lies upon you! If you never had thus treated a Saviour, you might most justly have been damned to all eternity: It would but be exactly agreeable to your treatment of God. But besides this, when God, notwithstanding, has offered you his own dear Son, to save you from this endless misery you had deserved, and not only so, but to make you happy eternally in the enjoyment of himself, you refused him, and would not have him for your Saviour, and still refuse to comply with the offers of the gospel; what can render any person more inexcusable? If you should now perish forever, what can you have to say?

Hereby the justice of God in your destruction appears in two respects.

1. It is more abundantly manifest that it is just that you should be destroyed. Justice never appears so conspicuous

as it does after refused and abused mercy. Justice in damnation appears abundantly the more clear and bright, after a wilful rejection of offered salvation. What can an offended prince do more than freely offer pardon to a condemned malefactor? And if he refuses to accept of it, will any one say that his execution is unjust?

2. God's justice will appear in your greater destruction. Besides the guilt that you would have had if a Saviour never had been offered, you bring that great additional guilt upon you, of most ungratefully refusing offered deliverance. What more base and vile treatment of God can there be, than for you, when justly condemned to eternal misery, and ready to be executed, and God graciously sends his own Son, who comes and knocks at your door with a pardon in his hand, and not only a pardon, but a deed of eternal glory; I say, what can be worse, than for you, out of dislike and enmity against God and his Son, to refuse to accept those benefits at his hands! How justly may the anger of God be greatly incensed and increased by it! When a sinner thus ungratefully rejects mercy, his last error is worse than the first; this is more heinous than all his former rebellion, and may justly bring down more fearful wrath upon him.

The heinousness of this sin of rejecting a Saviour especially appears in two things,

1. The greatness of the benefits offered; which appears in the greatness of the deliverance, which is from inexpressible degrees of corruption and wickedness of heart and life, the least degree of which is infinitely evil; and from misery that is everlasting; and in the greatness and glory of the inheritance purchased and offered, Heb. ii. 3. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

2. The wonderfulness of the way in which these benefits are procured and offered. That God should lay help on his own Son, when our case was so deplorable that help could be had in no mere creature; and that he should undertake for us, and should come into the world, and take upon him our nature, and should not only appear in a low state of life, but

should die such a death, and endure such torments and contempt for sinners while enemies how wonderful is it! And what tongue or pen can set forth the greatness of the ingratitude, baseness, and perverseness that there is in it, when a perishing sinner that is in the most extreme necessity of salvation, rejects it, after it is procured in such a way as this! That so glorious a person should be thus treated, and that when he comes on so gracious an errand! That he should stand so long offering himself, and calling, and inviting, as he has done to many of you, and all to no purpose, but all the while be set at nought! Surely you might justly be cast into hell without one more offer of a Saviour! Yea, and thrust down into the lowest hell! Herein you have exceeded the very devils; for they never rejected the offers of such glorious mercy; no, nor of any mercy at all. This will be the distinguishing condemnation of gospel sinners, John iii. 18. "He that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

That outward smoothness of your carriage towards Christ, that appearance of respect to him in your looks, your speeches and gestures, do not argue but that you set him at nought in your heart. There may be much of these outward shews of respect, and yet you be like Judas, that betrayed the Son of man with a kiss; and like those mockers that bowed the knee before him, and at the same time spit in his face.

III. If God should forever cast you off and destroy you, it would be agreeable to your treatment of others; it would be no other than what would be exactly answerable to your behavior towards your fellow creatures, that have the same human nature, and are naturally in the same circumstances with you, and that you ought to love as yourself. And that appears especially in two things,

1. You have many of you been opposite in your spirit to the salvation of others. There are several ways that natural men manifesta spirit of opposition against the salvation of other souls. It sometimes appears by a fear that their compan-

ions, acquaintance, and equals, will obtain mercy, and so become unspeakably happier than they. It is sometimes manifested by an uneasiness at the news of others' having hopefully obtained. It appears when persons envy others for it, and dislike them the more, and disrelish their talk, and avoid their company, and cannot bear to hear their religious discourse, and especially to receive warnings and counsels from them. And it oftentimes appears by their backwardness to entertain charitable thoughts of them, and their being difficultly brought to believe that it is really so, that they have obtained mercy, and a forwardness to listen to any thing that seems to contradict it. The devil hated to own Job's sincerity, Job i. 7. &c. and chap. ii. verses 3, 4, 5. There appears very often much of this spirit of the devil in natural men. Sometimes they are ready to make a ridicule of others' pretended godliness: They speak of the ground of others' hopes, as the enemies of the Jews did of the wall that they built. Neh. iv. 5. "Now Tobiah the Amonite was by him, and he said, That which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall. There are many that join with Sanballat and Tobiah, and are of the same spirit with them. There always was, and always will be, an enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. It appeared in Cain, who hated his brother, because he was more acceptable to God than himself; and it appears still in these times, and in this place. There are many that are like the elder brother, who could not bear it that the prodigal, when he returned, should be received with such joy and good entertainment, and was put into a fret by it, both against his brother that had returned, and his father that made him so welcome, Luke xv.

Thus have many of you been opposite to the salvation of others, that stand in as great necessity of it as you. You have been against their being delivered from everlasting misery, that can bear it no better than you; not because their salvation would do you any hurt, or their damnation help you, any otherwise than as it would gratify that vile spirit that is so much like the spirit of the devil, who, because he is misera-

ble himself, is unwilling that others should be happy. How just therefore is it that God should be opposite to your salvation?

If you have so little love or mercy in you as to begrudge your neighbor's salvation, whom you have no cause to hate, but the law of God and nature requires you to love; why is God bound to exercise such infinite love and mercy to you, as to save you at the price of his own blood, that he is no way bound to love, but that have deserved his hatred a thousand and a thousand times? You are not willing that others should be converted, that have behaved themselves injuriously towards you; and yet, will you count it hard if God does not bestow converting grace upon you that have deserved ten thousand times as ill of God, as any of your neighbors have of you? You are opposite to God's shewing mercy to these, and those that you think have been vicious persons, and are very unworthy of such mercy. Is others' unworthiness a just reason why God should not bestow mercy on them? And yet will God be hard, if, notwithstanding all your unworthiness, and the abominableness of your spirit and practice in his sight, he does not show you mercy? You would have God bestow liberally on you, and upbraid not; but yet, when he shews mercy to others, you are ready to upbraid as soon as you hear of it; you immediately are thinking with yourself how ill they have behaved themselves; and it may be your mouths on this occasion are open, enumerating and aggravating the sins they have been guilty of. You would have God bury all your faults, and wholly blot out all your transgressions; but yet if he bestows mercy on others, it may be you will take that occasion to rake up all their old faults that you can think of. You do not much reflect on and condemn yourself for your baseness and unjust spirit towards others, in your opposition to their salvation; you do not quarrel with yourself, and condemn yourself for this; but yet you, to your heart, will quarrel with God, and condemn him, and fret at his dispensations, because you think he seems opposite to shewing mercy to you. One would think

that the consideration of these things should for ever stop your mouth.

2. Consider how you have promoted others' damnation. Many of you, by the bad examples you have set, by corrupting the minds of others, by your sinful conversation, by leading them into sin, or strengthening them in sin, and by the mischief that you have done in human society other ways, that might be mentioned, have been guilty of those things that have tended to others' damnation. You have heretofore appeared on the side of sin and Satan, and have behaved yourself so as much to strengthen their interest, and have been many ways accessory to others' sins, have hardened others' hearts and thereby have done what has tended to the ruin of their souls.

And without doubt there are those here present that have been in a great measure the means of others' damnation. Though it is true that it is determined of God whom he will save, and whom not, from all eternity, yet one man may really be a mean of others' damnation as well as salvation. Christ charges the scribes and pharisees with this, Matth. xxiii. 13. "Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering, to go in." We have no reason to think that this congregation has none in it that are cursed from day to day by poor souls that are roaring out in hell, whose damnation they have been a mean of, or have greatly contributed to.

There are many that contribute to their own children's damnation, by neglecting their education, and setting them bad examples, and bringing them up in sinful ways: They take some care of their bodies, but take but little care of their poor souls; they provide for them bread to eat, but deny them the bread of life, that their famishing souls stand in need of. And are there no such parents here that have thus treated their children? If their children be not gone to hell, it is not because they have not done what has tended to their destruction. Seeing therefore you have had no more regard to others' salvation, and have promoted their damnation, how justly might God leave you to perish yourself?

IV. If God should eternally cast you off, it would but be agreeable to your own behavior towards yourself: And that in two respects;

1. In being so careless of your own salvation. You have refused to take care for your salvation, as God has counselled and commanded you from time to time; and why may not God neglect it, now you seek it of him? Is God obliged to be more careful of your happiness, than you are, either of your own happiness or his glory? Is God bound to take that care for you, out of love to you, that you will not take for yourself, either from love to yourself, or regard to his authority? How long, and how greatly, have you neglected the welfare of your precious soul, refusing to take pains and deny yourself, or put yourself a little out of your way for your salvation, while God has been calling upon you! Neither your duty to God, nor love to your own soul, were enough to induce you to do little things for your own eternal welfare; and yet do you now expect that God should do great things, putting forth almighty power, and exercising infinite mercy for it? You was urged to take care for your salvation, and not to put it off: You was told that that was the best time, before you grew older, and that it might be, if you would put it off, God would not hear you afterwards; but yet you would not hearken; you would run the venture of it. Now how justly might God order it so, that it should be too late, leaving you to seek in vain? You was told, that you would repent of it if you delayed; but you would not hear: How justly therefore may God give you cause to repent of it, by refusing to show you mercy now? If God sees you going on in ways contrary to his commands and his glory, and requires you to forsake them, and tells you that they are ways that tend to the destruction of your own soul, and therefore counsels you to avoid them, and you refuse; how just would it be if God should be provoked by it, henceforward to be as careless of the good of your soul as you are yourself?

2. You have not only neglected your salvation, but you have wilfully taken direct courses to undo yourself. You have

gone on in those ways and practices that have directly tended to your damnation, and have been perverse and obstinate in it. You cannot plead ignorance; you had all the light set before you that you could desire: God told you that you was undoing yourself; but yet you would do it: He told you that the path you was going in led to destruction, and counselled you to avoid it; but you would not hearken: How justly therefore may God leave you to be undone! You have obstinately persisted to travel in the way that leads to hell for a long time, contrary to God's continual counsels and commands, till it may be at length you are almost to your journey's end, and are come near to hell's gate, and so begin to be sensible of your danger and misery; and now account it unjust and hard if God will not deliver you? You have destroyed yourself, and destroyed yourself wilfully, contrary to God's repeated counsels, yea, and destroyed yourself in fighting against God: Now therefore, why do you blame any but yourself if you are destroyed? If you will undo yourself in opposing God, and while God opposes you by his calls and counsels, and, it may be too, by the convictions of his Spirit, what can you object against it, if God now leaves you to be undone? You would have your own way, and did not like that God should oppose you in it, and your way was to ruin your own soul: How just therefore is it, if, now at length, God ceases to oppose you, and falls in with you, and lets your soul be ruined; and as you would destroy yourself, so should put to his hand to destroy you too! The ways you went on in, had a natural tendency to your misery: If you would drink poison in opposition to God, and in contempt of him and his advice, whom can you blame but yourself if you are poisoned, and so perish? If you would run into the fire against all restraints both of God's mercy and authority, you must even blame yourself if you are burnt.

Thus I have proposed some things to your consideration, which, if you are not exceeding blind, senseless, and perverse, will stop your mouth, and convince you that you stand justly condemned before God, and that he would in no wise deal hardly with you, but altogether justly, in denying you any

mercy, and in refusing to hear your prayers, let you pray never so earnestly, and never so often, and continue in it never so long; and that God may utterly disregard your tears and moans, your heavy heart, your earnest desires, and great endeavors; and that he may cast you into eternal destruction, without any regard to your welfare, denying you converting grace, and giving you over to Satan, and at last cast you into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, to be there to eternity, having no rest day nor night, forever glorifying his justice upon you, in the presence of the holy angels and the presence of the Lamb.

Object. But here many may still object, (for I am sensible it is an hard thing to stop sinners' mouths) "God shews mercy to others that have done these things as well as I, yea, that have done a great deal worse than I."

Ans. 1. That does not prove that God is any way bound to shew mercy to you, or them either. If God does bestow it on others, he does not bestow it on them because he is bound to bestow it: He might if he had pleased, with glorious justice, have denied it them. If God bestows it on some, that does not prove that he is bound to bestow it on any; and if he is bound to bestow it on none, then he is not bound to bestow it on you. God is in debt to none; and if he gives to some that he is not in debt to, because it is his pleasure, that does not bring him into debt to others. It alters not the case as to you at all, whether others have it or have it not: You do not deserve damnation the less, than if mercy never had been bestowed on any at all. Matth. xx. 15. "Is thine eye evil, because I am good?"

2. If this objection be good, then the exercise of God's mercy is not in his own right, and his grace is not his own to give. That which God may not dispose of as he pleases, is not his own; for that which is one's own, is at his own disposal; but if it be not God's own, then he is not capable of making a gift or present of it to any one; it is impossible to give a debt.

What is it that you would make of God? Must the great God be tied up to that, that he must not use his own pleasure in bestowing his own gifts, but if he bestows them on one, must be looked upon obliged to bestow them on another? Is not God worthy to have the same right, with respect to the gifts of his grace, that a man has to his money or goods? Is it because God is not so great, and should be more in subjection than man, that this cannot be allowed him? If any of you see cause to shew kindness to a neighbor, do all the rest of your neighbors come to you, and tell you, that you owe them so much as you have given to such a man? But this is the way that you deal with God, as though God were not worthy to have as absolute a property in his goods, as you have in yours.

At this rate God cannot make a present of any thing; he has nothing of his own to bestow: If he has a mind to shew peculiar favor to some, or to lay some particular persons under peculiar obligations to him, he cannot do it; because he has no special gift, that his creatures stand in great need of, and that would tend greatly to their happiness, at his own disposal. If this be the case, why do you pray to God to bestow saving grace upon you? If God does not fairly deny it to you, because he bestows it on others, then it is not worth your while to pray for it, but you may go and tell him that he has bestowed it on these and those, as bad or worse than you, and so demand it of him as a debt. And at this rate persons never need to thank God for salvation, when it is bestowed; for what occasion is there to thank God for that which was not at his own disposal, and that he could not fairly have denied? The thing at bottom is, that men have low thoughts of God, and high thoughts of themselves; and therefore it is that they look upon God as having so little right, and they so much. Matth. xx. 15. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?"

3. God may justly shew greater respect to others than to you, for you have shown greater respect to others than to God. You have shown greater respect to men than to God. You have rather chosen to offend God than offend men. God only shews a greater respect to others, that are by nature your

equals, than to you; but you have shown a greater respect to those that are infinitely inferior to God than to him. You have shown a greater regard to wicked men than to God; you have honored them more, loved them better, and adhered to them rather than to him. Yea, you have honored the devil, in many respects, more than God: You have chosen his will and his interest; rather than God's will, and his glory: You have chosen a little worldly pelf, rather than God: You have set more by a vile lust than by him: You have chosen these things, and rejected God: You have set your hearts on these things, and cast God behind your back: And where is the injustice if God is pleased to shew greater respect to others than to you, or if he chooses others and rejects you? You have shown great respect to vile and worthless things, and no respect to God's glory; and why may not God set his love on others, and have no respect to your happiness? You have shewn great respect to others and not to God, that you are laid under infinite obligations to respect above all; and why may not God shew respect to others, and not to you, that never have laid him under the least obligation?

And will you not be ashamed, notwithstanding all these things, still to open your mouth, to object and cavil about the decrees of God, and other things that you cannot fully understand! Let the decrees of God be what they will, that alters not the case as to your liberty, any more than if God had only foreknown. And why is God to blame for decreeing things? How unbecoming an infinitely wise Being would it have been to have made a world, and let things run at random, without disposing events, or foreordering how they should come to pass? And what is that to you, how God has foreordered things, as long as your constant experience teaches you, that that does not hinder your liberty, or your doing what you choose to do. This you know, and your daily practice and behavior amongst men declares that you are fully sensible of it, with respect to yourself and others: And still to object, because there are some things in God's dispensations above your understanding, is exceeding unreasonable. Your own conscience charges you

with great guilt, and with those things that have been mentioned, let the secret things of God be what they will. Your conscience charges you with those vile dispositions, and that base behavior towards God, that you would at any time most highly resent in your neighbor towards you, and that not a whit the less for any concern those secret counsels and mysterious dispensations of God may have in the matter. It is in vain for you to exalt yourself against an infinitely great, and holy, and just God. If you continue in it, it will be to your eternal shame and confusion, when hereafter you shall see at whose door all the blame of your misery lies.

I will finish what I have to say to natural men in the application of this doctrine with a caution not to improve the doctrine to discouragement. For though it would be righteous in God forever to cast you off, and destroy you, yet it will also be just in God to save you, in and through Christ, who has made complete satisfaction for all sin. Rom. iii. 25, 26. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Yea, God may, through this Mediator, not only justly, but honorably shew you mercy. The blood of Christ is so precious, that it is fully sufficient to pay that debt that you have contracted, and perfectly to vindicate the divine Majesty from all that dishonor that has been cast upon it, by those many great sins of yours that have been mentioned. It was as great, and indeed a much greater thing, for Christ to die, than it would have been for you and all mankind to have burnt in hell to all eternity. Of such dignity and excellency is Christ in the eyes of God, that, seeing he has suffered so much for poor sinners, God is willing to be at peace with them, however vile and unworthy they have been, and on how many accounts soever the punishment would be just. So that you need not be at all discouraged from seeking mercy, for there is enough in Christ.

Indeed it would not become the glory of God's majesty to shew mercy to you that have been so sinful and vile a creature, for any thing that you have done, for such worthless and despicable things as your prayers, and other religious performances; it would be very dishonorable and unworthy of God so to do, and it is in vain to expect it: He will shew mercy only on Christ's account, and that, according to his sovereign pleasure, on whom he pleases, when he pleases, and in what manner he pleases. You cannot bring him under the obligation by your works; do what you will, he will not look on himself obliged. But if it be his pleasure, he can honorably shew mercy through Christ to any sinner of you all, not one in this congregation excepted.

Therefore here is encouragement for you still to seek and wait, notwithstanding all your wickedness; agreeably to Samuel's speech to the children of Israel, when they were terrified with the thunder and rain that God sent, and their guilt stared them in the face, 1 Sam. xii. 20. "Fear not; ye have done all this wickedness; yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your hearts."

I would conclude this discourse by improving the doctrine, in the second place, very briefly to put the godly in mind of the wonderfulness of the grace of God towards them. For such were some of you.....The case was just so with you as you have heard; you had such a wicked heart, you lived such a wicked life, and it would have been most just with God for ever to have cast you off: But he has had mercy upon you; he hath made his glorious grace appear in your everlasting salvation. You have behaved yourself so as you have heard towards God: You had no love to God; but yet he has exercised unspeakable love to you: You have contemned God, and set light by him; but so great a value has God's grace set on you and your happiness, that you have been redeemed at the price of the blood of his own Son: You chose to be with Satan in his service; but yet God hath made you a joint heir with Christ of his glory. You was ungrateful for past mercies; but yet God not only continued those mercies, but be-

stowed unspeakably greater mercies upon you: You refused to hear when God called; but yet God heard you when you called: You abused the infiniteness of God's mercy to encourage yourself in sin against God; but yet God has manifested the infiniteness of that mercy, in the exercises of it towards you: You have rejected Christ, and set him at nought; and yet he is become your Saviour: You have neglected your own salvation; but God has not neglected it: You have destroyed yourself; but yet in God has been your help. God has magnified his free grace towards you, and not to others; because he has chosen you, and it hath pleased him to set his love upon you.

O! what cause is here for praise? What obligations are upon you to bless the Lord, who hath dealt bountifully with you, and to magnify his holy name? What cause to praise him in humility to walk humbly before God; and to be conformed to that in Ezek. xvi. 63: "That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God!" You should never open your mouth in boasting, or selfjustification: You should lie the lower before God for his mercy to you. But you have reason, the more abundantly for your past sins, to open your mouth in God's praises, that they may be continually in your mouth, both here and to all eternity, for his rich, unspeakable, and sovereign mercy to you, whereby he, and he alone, hath made you to differ from others.

SERMON IX.

The future Punishment of the Wicked unavoidable and intolerable.

EZEKIEL xxii. 14.

CAN THINE HEART ENDURE, OR CAN THINE HANDS BE STRONG IN THE DAYS THAT I SHALL DEAL WITH THEE? I THE LORD HAVE SPOKEN IT, AND WILL DO IT.

IN the former part of this chapter, we have a dreadful catalogue of the sins of Jerusalem; as you may see from the first to the thirteenth verse. In the thirteenth, which is the verse preceeding the text, God manifests his great displeasure and fearful wrath against them for those their iniquities. "Behold, I have smitten mine hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made, and at thy blood which hath been in the midst of thee." The expression of God's smiting his hand, signifies the greatness of his anger, and his preparing himself, as it were to execute wrath answerable to their heinous crimes. It is an allusion to what we sometimes see in men when they are surprised, by seeing or hearing of some horrid offence, or most intolerable injury, which very much stirs their spirits, and animates them with high resentment; on such an occasion they will rise up in wrath and smite their hands together, as an expression of the heat of their indignation, and full resolution to be avenged on those who have committed the injury; as in chap. xxi. 17. "I will also smite

* Dated April 1741.

mine hands together, and I will cause my fury to rest: I the Lord have said it."

Then, in the text, the punishment of that people is represented.

1. The nature of their punishment is more generally represented in that therein God will undertake to *deal* with them: God here threatens to deal with the sinners in Jerusalem. The prophets could do nothing with them. God had sent them one after another; but those sinners were too strong for them, and beat one, and killed another. Therefore now God himself undertakes to deal with them.

2. Their punishment is more particularly represented in three things, viz. The intolerableness, the remedilessness, and the unavoidableness of it.

(1.) The intolerableness of it: *Can thine heart endure?*

(2.) The remedilessness, or the impossibility of their doing any thing for their own relief: *Can thine hands be strong?*

(3.) The unavoidableness of it: *I the Lord have spoken it, and will do it.*

DOCTRINE.

Since God hath undertaken to deal with impenitent sinners, they shall neither shun the threatened misery, nor deliver themselves out of it, nor can they bear it.

In handling this doctrine, I shall, 1. Show what is implied in God's undertaking to deal with impenitent sinners. 2. That therefore they cannot avoid punishment. 3. That they cannot in any measure deliver themselves from it, or do any thing for their own relief under it. 4. That they cannot bear it. 5. I shall answer an inquiry; and then proceed to the use.

I. I shall show what is implied in God's undertaking to deal with impenitent sinners.....Others are not able to deal with them. They baffle all the means used with them by those that are appointed to teach and to rule over them. They will not yield to parents, or to the counsels, warnings,

or reproofs of ministers: They prove obstinate and stiff-hearted. Therefore God undertakes to deal with them..... This implies the following things:

1. That God will reckon with them, and take of them satisfaction to his justice. In this world God puts forth his authority to command them; and to require subjection to him. In his commands he is very positive, strictly requiring of them the performance of such and such duties, and as positively forbidding such and such things which were contrary to their duty. But they have no regard to these commands. God continues commanding, and they continue rebelling. They make nothing of God's authority. God threatens, but they despise his threatenings.....They make nothing of dishonoring God; they care not how much their behavior is to the dishonor of God. He offers them mercy, if they will repent and return; but they despise his mercy as well as his wrath. God calleth, but they refuse.....Thus they are continually plunging themselves deeper and deeper in debt, and at the same time imagine they shall escape the payment of the debt, and design entirely to rob God of his due.

But God hath undertaken to right himself. He will reckon with them; he hath undertaken to see that the debts due to him are paid. All their sins are written in his book; not one of them is forgotten, and every one must be paid. If God be wise enough, and strong enough, he will have full satisfaction: He will exact the very uttermost farthing. He undertakes it as his part, as what belongs to him, to see himself righted, wherein he hath been wronged. Deut. xxxii. 35. "To me belongeth vengeance." *Ibid.* vii. 10. "He will not be slack to him that hateth him; he will repay him to his face."

2. He hath undertaken to vindicate the honor of his Majesty. His Majesty they despise. They hear that he is a great God; but they despise his greatness; they look upon him worthy of contempt, and treat him accordingly. They hear of him by the name of a great King; but his authority they regard not, and sometimes trample upon it for years together.

But God hath not left the honor of his Majesty wholly to their care. Though they now trample it in the dust, yet that is no sign that it will finally be lost. If God had left it wholly in their hands, it would indeed be lost. But God doth not leave his honor and his glory with his enemies; it is too precious in his eyes to be so neglected. He hath reserved the care of it to himself: He will see to it that his own injured Majesty is vindicated. If the honor of God, upon which sinners trample, finally lie in the dust, then it will be because he is not strong enough to vindicate himself. He hath sworn that great oath in Numb. xiv. 21. "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord."

Sinners despise his Son, and trample him under their feet. But he will see, if he cannot make the glory of his Son appear, with respect to them; that all the earth may know how evil a thing it is to despise the Son of God.....God intends that all men and angels, all heaven and all earth, shall see whether he be sufficient to magnify himself upon sinners who now despise him. He intends that the issue of things with respect to them shall be open, that all men may see it.

3. He hath undertaken to subdue impenitent sinners. Their hearts while in this world are very unsubdued. They lift up their heads and conduct themselves very proudly and contemptuously, and often sin with an high hand. They set their mouths against the heavens, and their tongues walk through the earth. They practically say as Pharaoh did, "Who is the Lord? I know not the Lord, neither will I obey his voice." Job xxi. 41. "They say to God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways."

Some, who cover their sin with specious show, who put on a face of religion, and a demure countenance and behavior, yet have this spirit secretly reigning in their breasts. Notwithstanding all their fair show, and good external carriage, they despise God in their hearts, and have the weapons of war about them, though they are secret enemies, and carry their swords under their skirts. They have most proud, stubborn, and rebellious hearts, which are ready to rise in opposi-

tion, to contend with him, and to find fault with his dispensations. Their hearts are full of pride, enmity, stubbornness, and blasphemy, which work in them many ways, while they sit under the preaching of the word, and while the spirit of God is striving with them; and they always continue to oppose and resist God as long as they live in the world; they never lay down the weapons of their rebellion."

But God hath undertaken to deal with them and to subdue them; and those proud and stubborn hearts, which will not yield to the power of God's word, shall be broken by the power of his hand. If they will not be willing subjects to the golden sceptre, and will not yield to the attractives of his love, they shall be subject to the force of the iron rod, whether they will or no.

Them that proudly set up their own righteousness, and their own wills against God, God hath undertaken to bring down; and without doubt, it will be done. He hath undertaken to make those who are now regardless of God, regard him. They shall know that he is Jehovah. Now they will not own that he is the Lord; but they shall know it. Isa. xxvi. 11. "Lord, when thine hand is lifted up, they will not see: But they shall see."

Now wicked men not only hate God, but they slight him; they are not afraid of him. But he will subdue their contempt. When he shall come to take them in hand, they will hate him still; but they will not slight him; they will not make light of his power as they now do; they will see and feel too much of the infinity of his power to slight it.....They are now wont to slight his wrath; but then they will slight it no more, they will be infinitely far from it, they will find by sufficient experience that his wrath is not to be slighted: They will learn this to their cost, and they never will forget it.

4. God hath undertaken to rectify their judgments. Now they will not be convinced of those things which God tells them in his word. Ministers take much pains to convince them, but all is in vain. Therefore God will undertake to convince them, and he will do it effectually.....Now they will

not be convinced of the truth of divine things. They have indeed convincing arguments set before them; they hear and see enough to convince them; yet so prone are they to unbelief and Atheism, that divine things never seem to them to be real. But God will hereafter make them seem real.

Now they are always doubting of the truth of the Scriptures, questioning whether they be the word of God, and whether the threatenings of Scripture be true. But God hath undertaken to convince them that those threatenings are true, and he will make them to know that they are true, so that they will never doubt any more for ever. They will be convinced by dear experience.....Now they are always questioning whether there be any such place as hell. They hear much about it, but it always seems to them like a dream. But God will make it seem otherwise than a dream.....Now they are often told of the vanity of the world; but we may as well preach to the beasts, to persuade them of the vanity of earthly things. But God will undertake to convince them of this; he will hereafter give them a thorough conviction of it, so that they shall have a strong sense of the vanity of all these things.

Now ministers often tell sinners of the great importance of an interest in Christ, and that that is the one thing needful. They are also told the folly of delaying the care of their souls, and how much it concerns them to improve their opportunity. But the instructions of ministers do not convince them, therefore God will undertake to convince them.

Impenitent sinners, while in this world, hear how dreadful hell is. But they will not believe that it is so dreadful as ministers represent. They cannot think that they shall to all eternity suffer such exquisite and horrible torments. But they shall be taught and convinced to purpose, that the representations ministers give of those torments, agreeable to the word of God, are no bugbears; and that the wrath of God is indeed as dreadful as they declare.....Since God hath undertaken to deal with sinners, and to rectify their judgments in these matters, he will do it thoroughly; for his work is per-

fect; when he undertakes to do things, he doth not do them by halves; therefore before he shall have done with sinners, he will convince them effectually, so that they shall never be in danger of relapsing into their former errors any more: He will convince them of their folly and stupidity in entertaining such notions as they now entertain.

Thus God hath undertaken to deal with obstinate unbelievers. They carry things on in great confusion; but we need not be dismayed at it: Let us wait, and we shall see that God will rectify things. Sinners will not always continue to rebel and despise with impunity. The honor of God will in due time be vindicated; and they shall be subdued and convicted, and shall give an account. There is no sin, not so much as an idle word that they shall speak, but they must give an account of it; Matth. xii. 36. And their sins must be fully balanced, and recompensed, and satisfaction obtained. Because judgment against their evil works is not speedily executed, their hearts are fully set in them to do evil. Yet God is a righteous judge; he will see that judgment is executed in due time.

I come now,

II. To show, that therefore impenitent sinners shall not avoid their due punishment....God hath undertaken to inflict it; he hath engaged to do it; he takes it as his work, as what properly belongs to him, and we may expect it of him. If he hath sworn by his life, that he will do it; and if he hath power sufficient; if he is the living God, doubtless we shall see it done. And that God hath declared that he will punish impenitent sinners, is manifest from many scriptures; as Deut. xxxii. 41. "I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me." Deut. vii. 10. "He will not be slack to him that hateth him: He will repay him to his face." Exod. xxxiv. 7. "That will by no means clear the guilty." Nahum i. 3. "The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked."

God saith in the text, "I the Lord have spoken it, and will do it;" which leaves no room to doubt of the actual fulfilment of the threatening in its utmost extent....Some wicked men have flattered themselves, that although God hath threatened very dreadful things to wicked men for their sins, yet in his heart he never intends to fulfil his threatenings, but only to terrify them, and make them afraid, while they live. But would the infinitely holy God, who is not a man that he should lie, and who speaketh no vain words, utter himself in this manner: *I the Lord have spoken it, and will do it; I have not only threatened, but I will also fulfil my threatenings*; when at the same time these words did not agree with his heart, but he secretly knew that though he had spoken, yet he intended not to do it? Who is he that dares to entertain such horrid blasphemy in his heart?

No; let no impenitent sinner flatter himself so vainly and foolishly. If it were indeed only a man, a being of like impotency and mutability with themselves, who had undertaken to deal with them; they might perhaps with some reason flatter themselves, that they should find some means to avoid the threatened punishment. But since an omniscient, omnipotent, immutable God hath undertaken, vain are all such hopes.

There is no hope that possibly they may steal away to heaven, though they die unconverted. There is no hope that they can deceive God by any false show of repentance and faith, and so be taken to heaven through mistake; for the eyes of God are as a flame of fire; they perfectly see through every man; the inmost closet of the heart is all open to him.

There is no hope of escaping the threatened punishment by sinking into nothing at death, like brute creaures. Indeed, many wicked men upon their deathbeds wish for this. If it were so, death would be nothing to them in comparison with what it now is. But all such wishes are vain.

There is no hope of their escaping without notice, when they leave the body. There is no hope that God, by reason of the multiplicity of affairs which he hath to mind, will happen to overlook them, and not take notice of them, when they

come to die; and so that their souls will slip away privately, and hide themselves in some secret corner, and so escape divine vengeance.

There is no hope that they shall be missed in a crowd at the day of judgment, and that they can have opportunity to hide themselves in some cave or den of the mountains, or in any secret hole of the earth; and that while so doing, they will not be minded, by reason of the many things which will be the objects of attention on that day....Neither is there any hope that they will be able to croud themselves in among the multitude of the saints at the right hand of the Judge, and so go to heaven undiscovered....Nor is there any hope that God will alter his mind, or that he will repent of what he hath said; for he is not the son of man that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? When did God ever undertake to do any thing and fail?

I come now,

III. To show, that as impenitent sinners cannot shun the threatened punishment; so neither can they do any thing to deliver themselves from it, or to relieve themselves under it. This is implied in those words of the text, *Can thine hands be strong?* It is with our hands that we make and accomplish things for ourselves. But the wicked in hell will have no strength of hand to accomplish any thing at all for themselves, or to bring to pass any deliverance, or any degree of relief.

1. They will not be able in that conflict to overcome their enemy, and so to deliver themselves. God, who will then undertake to deal with them, and will gird himself with might to execute wrath, will be their enemy, and will act the part of an enemy with a witness; and they will have no strength to oppose him. Those who live negligent of their souls under the light of the gospel, act as if they supposed, that they should be able hereafter to make their part good with God. 1 Cor. x. 22. "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we

stronger than he?"....But they will have no power, no might to resist that omnipotence, which will be engaged against them.

2. They will have no strength in their hands to do any thing to appease God, or in the least to abate the fierceness of his wrath. They will not be able to offer any satisfaction: They will not be able to procure God's pity. Though they cry, God will not hear them. They will find no price to offer to God, in order to purchase any favor, or to pay any part of their debt.

3. They will not be able to find any to befriend them, and intercede with God for them. They had the offer of a mediator often made them in this world; but they will have no offers of such a nature in hell. None will befriend them. They will have no friend in HELL; all there will be their enemies. They will have no friend in heaven: None of the saints or angels will befriend them; or if they should, it would be to no purpose. There will be no creature that will have any power to deliver them, nor will any ever pity them.

4. Nor will they ever be able to make their escape. They will find no means to break prison and flee. In hell they will be reserved in chains of darkness for ever and ever. Malefactors have often found means to break prison, and escape the hand of civil justice. But none ever escaped out of the prison of hell, which is God's prison. It is a strong prison: It is beyond any finite power, or the united strength of all wicked men and devils, to unlock, or break open the door of that prison. Christ hath the key of hell; "he shuts and no man opens."

5. Nor will they ever be able to find any thing to relieve them in hell. They will never find any resting place there; any place of respite; any secret corner, which will be cooler than the rest, where they may have a little respite, a small abatement of the extremity of their torment. They never will be able to find any cooling stream or fountain, in any part of that world of torment; no, nor so much as a drop of water to cool their tongues. They will find no company to give

them any comfort, or to do them the least good. They will find no place, where they can remain, and rest, and take breath for one minute: For they will be tormented with fire and brimstone; and will have no rest day nor night for ever and ever.

Thus impenitent sinners will be able neither to shun the punishment threatened, nor to deliver themselves from it, nor to find any relief under it.

I come now,

IV. To show, that neither will they be able to bear it. Neither will their hands be strong to deliver themselves from it, nor will their hearts be able to endure it. It is common with men, when they meet with calamities in this world, in the first place to endeavor to shun them. But if they find, that they cannot shun them, then after they are come, they endeavor to deliver themselves from them as soon as they can; or at least, to order things so, as to deliver themselves in some degree. But if they find that they can by no means deliver themselves, and see that the case is so that they must bear them; then they set themselves, to bear them: They fortify their spirits, and take up a resolution, that they will support themselves under them as well as they can. They clothe themselves with all the resolution and courage they are masters of, to keep their spirits from sinking under their calamities.

But it will be utterly in vain for impenitent sinners to think to do thus with respect to the torments of hell. They will not be able to endure them, or at all to support themselves under them: The torment will be immensely beyond their strength. What will it signify for a worm, which is about to be pressed under the weight of some great rock, to be let fall with its whole weight upon it, to collect its strength, to set itself to bear up the weight of the rock, and to preserve itself from being crushed by it? Much more in vain will it be for a poor damned soul, to endeavor to support itself under the weight of the wrath of Almighty God. What is the

strength of man, who is but a worm, to support himself against the power of Jehovah, and against the fierceness of his wrath? What is man's strength, when set to bear up against the exertions of infinite power? Matth. xxi. 44. "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

When sinners hear of hell torments, they sometimes think with themselves: Well, if it shall come to that, that I must go to hell, I will bear it as well as I can: As if by cloathing themselves with resolution and firmness of mind, they would be able to support themselves in some measure: When alas! They will have no resolution, no courage at all. However, they shall have prepared themselves, and collected their strength; yet as soon as they shall begin to feel that wrath, their hearts will melt and be as water. However, before they may seem to harden their hearts, in order to prepare themselves to bear, yet the first moment they feel it, their hearts will become like wax before the furnace. Their courage and resolution will be all gone in an instant; it will vanish away like a shadow in the twinkling of an eye. The stoutest and most sturdy will have no more courage than the feeblest infant: Let a man be an infant, or a giant, it will be all one. They will not be able to keep alive any courage, any strength, any comfort, any hope at all.

I come now as was proposed,

V. To answer an enquiry which may naturally be raised concerning these things.

ENQUIRY. Some may be ready to say, If this be the case, if impenitent sinners can neither shun future punishment, nor deliver themselves from it, nor bear it; then what will become of them?

ANSWER. They will wholly sink down into eternal death. There will be that sinking of heart, of which we now cannot conceive. We see how it is with the body when in extreme pain. The nature of the body will support itself for a considerable time under very great pain, so as to keep from wholly

sinking. There will be great struggles, lamentable groans and panting, and it may be convulsions. These are the strugglings of nature to support itself under the extremity of the pain. There is, as it were, a great loathness in nature to yield to it; it cannot bear wholly to sink.

But yet sometimes pain of body is so very extreme and exquisite, that the nature of the body cannot support itself under it; however loath it may be to sink, yet it cannot bear the pain; there are a few struggles, and throws, and pantings, and it may be a shriek or two, and then nature yields to the violence of the torments, sinks down, and the body dies. This is the death of the body. So it will be with the soul in hell; it will have no strength or power to deliver itself; and its torment and horror will be so great, so mighty, so vastly disproportioned to its strength, that having no strength in the least to support itself, although it be infinitely contrary to the nature and inclination of the soul utterly to sink; yet it will sink, it will utterly and totally sink, without the least degree of remaining comfort, or strength, or courage, or hope. And though it will never be annihilated, its being and perception will never be abolished; yet such will be the infinite depth of gloominess that it will sink into, that it will be in a state of death, eternal death.

The nature of man desires happiness; it is the nature of the soul to crave and thirst after wellbeing; and if it be under misery, it eagerly pants after relief; and the greater the misery is, the more eagerly doth it struggle for help. But if all relief be withholden, all strength overborn, all support utterly gone; then it sinks into the darkness of death.

We can conceive but little of the matter; we cannot conceive what that sinking of the soul in such a case is. But to help your conception, imagine yourself to be cast into a fiery oven, all of a glowing heat, or into the midst of a glowing brickkiln, or of a great furnace, where your pain would be as much greater than that occasioned by accidentally touching a coal of fire, as the heat is greater. Imagine also that your body were to lie there for a quarter of an hour, full of fire, as

full within and without as a bright coal of fire, all the while full of quick sense; what horror would you feel at the entrance of such a furnace! And how long would that quarter of an hour seem to you! If it were to be measured by a glass, how long would the glass seem to be a running! And after you had endured it for one minute, how overbearing would it be to you to think that you had it to endure the other fourteen!

But what would be the effect on your soul, if you knew you must lie there enduring that torment to the full for twenty-four hours! And how much greater would be the effect, if you knew you must endure it for a whole year; and how vastly greater still, if you knew you must endure it for a thousand years! O then, how would your hearts sink, if you thought, if you knew, that you must bear it for ever and ever! That there would be no end! That after millions of *millions of* ages, your torment would be no nearer to an end, than ever it was; and that you never, never should be delivered!

But your torment in hell will be immensely greater than this illustration represents. How then will the heart of a poor creature sink under it! How utterly inexpressible and inconceivable must the sinking of the soul be in such a case!

This is the death threatened in the law. This is dying in the highest sense of the word. This is to die sensibly; to die and know it; to be sensible of the gloom of death. This is to be undone; this is worthy of the name of destruction. This sinking of the soul under an infinite weight, which it cannot bear, is the gloom of hell. We read in scripture of the blackness of darkness; this is it, this is the very thing. We read in scripture of sinners being lost, and of their losing their souls: This is the thing intended; this is to loose the soul: They that are the subjects of this are utterly lost.

APPLICATION.

This subject may be applied in an use of *awakening* to impenitent sinners.....What hath been said under this doctrine is for thee, O impenitent sinner, O poor wretch, who art in the

same miserable state in which thou camest into the world, excepting that thou art loaded with vastly greater guilt by thine actual sins. These dreadful things which thou hast heard are for thee, who art yet unconverted, and still remainest an alien and stranger, without Christ and without God in the world. They are for thee, who to this day remainest an enemy to God, and a child of the devil, even in this remarkable season, when others both here and elsewhere, far and near, are flocking to Christ; for thee who hearest the noise, the fame of these things, but knowest nothing of the power of godliness in thine own heart.

Whoever thou art, whether young or old, little or great, if thou art in a Christless, unconverted state, this is the wrath, this is the death to which thou art condemned. This is the wrath that abideth on thee; this is the hell over which thou hangest, and into which thou art ready to drop every day and every night.

If thou shalt remain blind, and hard, and dead in sin a little longer, this destruction will come upon thee: God hath spoken and he will do it. It is vain for thee to flatter thyself with hopes that thou shalt avoid it, or to say in thine heart, perhaps it will not be; perhaps it will not be just so; perhaps things have been represented worse than they are. If thou wilt not be convinced by the word preached to thee by men in the name of God, God himself will undertake to convince thee. Ezek. xiv. 4, 7, 8.

Doth it seem to thee not real that thou shalt suffer such a dreadful destruction, because it seems to thee that thou dost not deserve it? And because thou dost not see any thing so horrid in thyself, as to answer such a dreadful punishment?.... Why is it that thy wickedness doth not seem bad enough to deserve this punishment? The reason is, that thou lovest thy wickedness; thy wickedness seems good to thee; it appears lovely to thee; thou dost not see any hatefulness in it, or to be sure, any such hatefulness as to answer such misery.

But know, thou stupid, blind, hardened wretch, that God doth not see, as thou seest with thy polluted eyes: Thy sins

in his sight are infinitely abominable.....Thou knowest that thou hast a thousand and a thousand times made light of the Majesty of God. And why should not that Majesty, which thou hast thus despised, be manifested in the greatness of thy punishment? Thou hast often heard what a great and dreadful God Jehovah is; but thou hast made so light of it, that thou hast not been afraid of him, thou hast not been afraid to sin against him, nor to go on day after day, by thy sins, to provoke him to wrath, nor to cast his commands under foot, and trample on them. Now why may not God, in the greatness of thy destruction, justly vindicate and manifest the greatness of that Majesty, which thou hast despised?

Thou hast despised the mighty power of God; thou hast not been afraid of it. Now why is it not fit that God should show the greatness of his power in thy ruin. What *king* is there who will not show his authority in the punishment of those subjects that despise it! And who will not vindicate his royal Majesty in executing vengeance on those that rise in rebellion? And art thou such a fool as to think that the great King of heaven and earth, before whom all other kings are so many grasshoppers, will not vindicate his kingly Majesty on such contemptuous rebels as thou art!....Thou art very much mistaken if thou thinkest so. If thou be regardless of God's Majesty, be it known to thee, God is not regardless of his own Majesty; he taketh care of the honor of it, and he will vindicate it.

Think it not strange that God should deal so severely with thee, or that the wrath which thou shalt suffer should be so great. For as great as it is, it is no greater than that love of God which thou hast despised. The love of God, and his grace, condescension, and pity to sinners in sending his Son into the world to die for them, is every whit as great and wonderful as this inexpressible wrath. This mercy hath been held forth to thee, and described in its wonderful greatness hundreds of times, and as often hath it been offered to thee; but thou wouldst not accept Christ; thou wouldst not have this great love of God; thou despisedst God's dying love;

thou trampledst the benefits of it under foot. Now why shouldst thou not have wrath as great as that love and mercy which thou despisest and rejectest? Doth it seem incredible to thee, that God should so harden his heart against a poor sinner, as so to destroy him, and to bear him down with infinite power and merciless wrath? And is this a greater thing than it is for thee to harden thy heart, as thou hast done, against infinite mercy, and against the dying love of God?

Doth it seem to thee incredible, that God should be so utterly regardless of the sinner's welfare, as so to sink him into an infinite abyss of misery? Is this shocking to thee? And is it not at all shocking to thee, that thou shouldst be so utterly regardless as thou hast been of the honor and glory of the infinite God?

It arises from thy foolish stupidity and senselessness, and is because thou hast an heart of stone, that thou art so senseless of thine own wickedness, as to think that thou hast not deserved such a punishment, and that it is to thee incredible that it will be inflicted upon thee.....But if, when all is said and done, thou be not convinced, wait but a little while, and thou wilt be convinced: God will undertake to do the work which ministers cannot do.....Though judgment against thine evil works be not yet executed, and God now let thee alone: Yet he will soon come upon thee with his great power, and then thou shalt know what God is, and what thou art.

Flatter not thyself, that if these things shall prove true, and the worst shall come, thou wilt set thyself to bear it as well as thou canst. What will it signify to set thyself to bear, and to collect thy strength to support thyself, when thou shalt fall into the hands of that omnipotent King, Jehovah? He that made thee, can make his sword approach unto thee. His sword is not the sword of man, nor is his wrath the wrath of man. If it were, possibly stoutness might be maintained under it. But it is the fierceness of the wrath of the great God, who is able to baffle and dissipate all thy strength in a moment. He can fill thy poor soul with an ocean of wrath, a deluge of fire and brimstone; or he can make it ten thousand times

fuller of torment than ever an oven was full of fire; and at the same time, can fill it with despair of ever seeing any end to its torment, or any rest from its misery: And then where will be thy strength? What will become of thy courage then? What will signify thine attempts to bear?

What art thou in the hands of the great God, who made heaven and earth by speaking a word? What art thou, when dealt with by that strength, which manages all this vast universe, holds the globe of the earth, directs all the motions of the heavenly bodies from age to age, and, when the fixed time shall come, will shake all to pieces?....There are other wicked beings a thousand times stronger than thou: There are the great Leviathans, strong and proud spirits of a gigantic stoutness and hardiness. But how little are they in the hands of the great God! they are less than weak infants; they are nothing, and less than nothing in the hands of an angry God, as will appear at the day of judgment....Their hearts will be broken; they will sink; they will have no strength nor courage left; they will be as weak as water; their souls will sink down into an infinite gloom, and abyss of death and despair..... Then what will become of thee, a poor worm, when thou shalt fall into the hands of that God, when he shall come to show his wrath, and make his power known on thee?

If the strength of all the wicked men on earth, and of all the devils in hell, were united in one, and thou wert possessed of it all; and if the courage, greatness, and stoutness of all their hearts were united in thy single heart, thou wouldst be nothing in the hands of Jehovah. If it were all collected, and thou shouldst set thyself to bear as well as thou couldst, all would sink under his great wrath in an instant, and would be utterly abolished: Thine hands would drop down at once, and thine heart would melt as wax.....The great mountains, the firm rocks, cannot stand before the power of God; as fast as they stand, they are tossed hither and thither, and skip like lambs, when God appears in his anger. He can tear the earth in pieces in a moment; yea, he can shatter the whole uni-

verse, and dash it to pieces at one blow. How then will thine hands be strong, or thine heart endure!

Thou canst not stand before a lion of the forest; an angry wild beast, if stirred up, will easily tear such an one as thou art in pieces. Yea, not only so, but thou art crushed before the moth. A little thing, a little worm or spider, or some such insect, is able to kill thee. What then canst thou do in the hands of God? It is vain to set the briers and thorns in battle array against glowing flames; the points of thorns, though sharp, do nothing to withstand the fire.

Some of you have seen buildings on fire; imagine therefore with yourselves, what a poor hand you would make at fighting with the flames, if you were in the midst of so great and fierce a fire. You have often seen a spider, or some other noisome insect, when thrown into the midst of a fierce fire, and have observed how immediately it yields to the force of the flames. There is no long struggle, no fighting against the fire, no strength exerted to oppose the heat, or to fly from it; but it immediately stretches forth itself and yields; and the fire takes possession of it, and at once it becomes full of fire, and is burned into a bright coal.....Here is a little image of what you will be the subjects of in hell, except you repent and fly to Christ. However you may think, that you will fortify yourselves, and bear as well as you can; the first moment you shall be cast into hell, all your strength will sink and be utterly abolished. To encourage yourselves, that you will set yourselves to bear hell torments as well as you can, is just as if a worm, that is about to be thrown into a glowing furnace, should swell and fortify itself, and prepare itself to fight the flames.

What can you do with lightnings? What doth it signify to fight with them? What an absurd figure would a poor weak man make, who, in a thunderstorm, should expect a flash of lightning on his head or his breast, and should go forth sword in hand to oppose it; when a stream of brimstone would, in an instant, drink up all his spirits and his life, and melt his sword!

Consider these things, all you enemies of God, and rejectors of Christ, whether you be old men and women, Christless heads of families, or young people and wicked children. Be assured, that if you do not hearken and repent, God intends to show his wrath, and make his power known upon you. He intends to magnify himself exceedingly in sinking you down in hell. He intends to show his great majesty at the day of judgment, before a vast assembly, in your misery; before a greater assembly many thousandfold than ever yet appeared on earth; before a vast assembly of saints, and a vast assembly of wicked men, a vast assembly of holy angels, and before all the crew of devils. God will before all these get himself honor in your destruction; you shall be tormented in the presence of them all.....Then all will see that God is a great God indeed; then all will see how dreadful a thing it is to sin against such a God, and to reject such a Saviour, such love and grace, as you have rejected and despised. All will be filled with awe at the great sight, and all the saints and angels will look upon you, and adore that majesty, and that mighty power, and that holiness and justice of God, which shall appear in your ineffable destruction and misery.

It is probable that here are some, who hear me this day, who at this very moment are unawakened, and are in a great degree careless about their souls. I fear there are some among us who are most fearfully hardened: Their hearts are harder than the very rocks. It is easier to make impressions upon an adamant than upon their hearts. I suppose some of you have heard all that I have said with ease and quietness: It appears to you as great big sounding words, but doth not reach your hearts. You have heard such things many times: You are old soldiers, and have been too much used to the roaring of heaven's cannon, to be frighted at it. It will therefore probably be in vain for me to say any thing further to you; I will only put you in mind that ere long God will deal with you. I cannot deal with you, you despise what I say; I have no power to make you sensible of your danger

and misery, and of the dreadfulness of the wrath of God. The attempts of men in this way have often proved vain.

However, God hath undertaken to deal with such men as you are. It is his manner commonly first to let men try their utmost strength; particularly to let ministers try, that thus he may show ministers their own weakness and impotency; and when they have done what they can, and all fails, then God takes the matter into his own hands.....So it seems by your obstinacy, as if God intended to undertake to deal with you. He will undertake to subdue you; he will see, if he cannot cure you of your senselessness and regardlessness of his threatenings. And you will be convinced; you will be subdued effectually; your hearts will be broken with a witness; your strength will be utterly broken, your courage and hope will sink. God will surely break those who will not bow.....God, having girded himself with his power and wrath, hath heretofore undertaken to deal with many hard, stubborn, senseless, obstinate hearts; and he never failed, he always did his work thoroughly.

It will not be long before you will be wonderfully changed. You who now hear of hell and the wrath of the great God, and sit here in these seats so easy and quiet, and go away so careless; by and by will shake, and tremble, and cry out, and shriek, and gnash your teeth, and will be thoroughly convinced of the vast weight and importance of these great things, which you now despise. You will not then need to hear sermons in order to make you sensible; you will be at a sufficient distance from slighting that wrath and power of God, of which you now hear with so much quietness and indifference.

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SERMON X.*

The Eternity of Hell Torments.

MATTHEW xxv. 46.

THESE SHALL GO AWAY INTO EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT.

IN this chapter we have the most particular description of the day of judgment, of any that we have in the whole Bible. Christ here declares, that when he shall hereafter sit on the throne of his glory, the righteous and the wicked shall be set before him, and separated one from the other, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. Then we have an account how both will be judged according to their works; how the good works of the one and the evil works of the other will be rehearsed, and how the sentence shall be pronounced accordingly. We are told what the sentence will be on each, and then in the verse of the text, we have an account of the execution of the sentence on both the righteous and the wicked. In the words of the text is the account of the execution of the sentence on the wicked or the ungodly: Concerning which, it is to my purpose to observe two things.

1. The duration of the punishment on which they are here said to enter: It is called *everlasting* punishment.

2. The time of their entrance on this everlasting punishment; viz. after the day of judgment, at the end of the world, when all these things that are of a temporary continu-

* Dated April, 1739.

ance shall have come to an end, and even those of them that are most lasting, the frame of the world itself; the earth which is said to abide forever; the ancient mountains and everlasting hills; the sun, moon and stars. When the heavens shall have waxed old like a garment, and as a vesture shall be changed, then shall be the time when the wicked shall enter on their punishment.

Doctrine. The misery of the wicked in hell will be absolutely eternal.

There are two diverse opinions that I mean to oppose in this doctrine. One is, That the eternal death that wicked men are threatened with in scripture, signifies no more than eternal annihilation; that men will be the subjects of eternal death, as they will be slain, and their life finally and forever be extinguished by God's anger; that God will punish their wickedness by eternally abolishing their being, and so that they shall suffer eternal death in this sense, that they shall be eternally dead, and never more come to life.

The other opinion which I mean to oppose, is, That though the punishment of the wicked shall consist in sensible misery, yet it shall not be absolutely eternal; but only of a very long continuance.

Therefore to establish the doctrine in opposition to these different opinions, I shall undertake to show,

I. That it is not contrary to the divine perfections to inflict on wicked men a punishment that is absolutely eternal.

II. That the eternal death which God threatens, is not annihilation, but an abiding sensible punishment or misery.

III. That this misery will not only continue for a very long time, but will be absolutely without end.

IV. That various good ends will be obtained by the eternal punishment of the wicked.

I. I am to show that it is not contrary to the divine perfections to inflict on wicked men a punishment that is absolutely eternal.

This is the sum of the objections usually made against this doctrine, That it is inconsistent with the justice, and especially with the *mercy* of God. And some say, If it be strictly *just*, yet, how can we suppose that a merciful God can bear eternally to torment his creatures?

1. Then I shall briefly show, That it is not inconsistent with the justice of God to inflict an eternal punishment. To evince this, I shall use only one argument, viz. that sin is heinous enough to deserve such a punishment, and such a punishment is no more than proportionable to the evil or demerit of sin. If the evil of sin be infinite, as the punishment is, then it is manifest that the punishment is no more than proportionable to the sin punished, and is no more than sin deserves. And if the obligation to love, honor, and obey God be infinite, then sin which is the violation of this obligation, is a violation of infinite obligation, and so is an infinite evil. Again, if God be infinitely worthy of love, honor, and obedience, then our obligation to love, and honor, and obey him is infinitely great. So that God being infinitely glorious, or infinitely worthy of our love, honor, and obedience; our obligation to love, honor, and obey him, and so to avoid all sin, is infinitely great. Again, our obligation to love, honor, and obey God being infinitely great, sin is the violation of infinite obligation, and so is an infinite evil. Once more, sin being an infinite evil, deserves an infinite punishment, an infinite punishment is no more than it deserves: Therefore such punishment is just; which was the thing to be proved. There is no evading the force of this reasoning, but by denying that God, the sovereign of the universe, is infinitely glorious; which I presume none of my hearers will adventure to do.

2. I am to show, That it is not inconsistent with the mercy of God, to inflict an eternal punishment on wicked men. It is an unreasonable and unscriptural notion of the mercy of God, that he is merciful in such a sense that he cannot bear

that penal justice should be executed. This is to conceive of the mercy of God as a passion to which his nature is so subject that God is liable to be moved, and affected, and overcome by seeing a creature in misery, so that he cannot bear to see justice executed; which is a most unworthy and absurd notion of the mercy of God, and would, if true, argue great weakness. It would be a great defect, and not a perfection, in the Sovereign and Supreme Judge of the world, to be merciful in such a sense that he could no bear to have penal justice executed. It is a very unscriptural notion of the mercy of God. The scriptures every where represent the mercy of God as free and sovereign, and not that the exercises of it are necessary, so that God cannot bear justice should take place. The scriptures abundantly speak of it as the glory of the divine attribute of mercy, that it is free and sovereign in its exercises; and not that it is so, that God cannot help but deliver sinners from misery. This is a mean and most unworthy idea of the divine mercy.

It is most absurd also as it is contrary to plain fact. For if there be any meaning in the objection, this is supposed in it, that all misery of the creature, whether just or unjust, is in itself contrary to the nature of God. For if his mercy be of such a nature, that a very great degree of misery, though just, is contrary to his nature; then it is only to add to the mercy, and then a less degree of misery is contrary to his nature; again to add further to it, and a still less degree of misery is contrary to his nature. And so, the mercy of God being infinite, all misery must be contrary to his nature; which we see to be contrary to fact; for we see that God in his providence, doth indeed inflict very great calamities on mankind even in this life.

However strong such kind of objections against the eternal misery of the wicked, may seem to the carnal, senseless hearts of men, as though it were against God's justice and mercy; yet their seeming strength, and its seeming to be incredible that God should give over any of his creatures to such a dreadful calamity, as eternal, helpless misery and torment,

altogether arises from a want of a sense of the infinite evil, odiousness and provocation that there is in sin. Hence it seems to us not suitable that any poor creature should be the subject of such misery, because we have no sense of any thing abominable and provoking in any creature answerable to it. If we had, then this infinite calamity would not seem unsuitable. For one thing would but appear answerable and proportionable to another, and so the mind would rest in it as fit and suitable, and no more than what is proper to be ordered by the just, holy and good Governor of the world.

That this is so we may be convinced by this consideration, viz. that when we hear or read, as sometimes we do, of very horrid things committed by some men, as for instance, some horrid instance of cruelty, it may be to some poor innocent child, or some holy martyr; when we read or hear how such and such persons delighted themselves in torturing them with lingering torments; what terrible distress the poor innocent creatures were in under their hands for many days together; and their cruel persecutors, having no regard to their shrieks and cries, only sported themselves with their misery, and would not vouchsafe even to put an end to their lives: I say, when we hear or read of such things, we have a sense of the evil of them, and they make a deep impression on our minds. Hence it seems just, and not only so, but every way fit and suitable, that God should inflict a very terrible punishment on persons who have perpetrated such wickedness: It seems no way disagreeable to any perfection of the Judge of the world; we can think of it without being at all shocked. The reason is, that we have a sense of the evil of their conduct, and a sense of the proportion there is between the evil or demerit of their conduct and the punishment.

Just so if we saw a proportion between the evil of sin and eternal punishment, if we saw something in wicked men that should appear as hateful to us, as eternal misery appears dreadful; something that should as much stir up indignation and detestation, as eternal misery does terror; all objections against this doctrine would vanish at once. Though now it

seem incredible; though when we hear of it and are so often told of it, we know not how to realize it; though when we hear of such a degree and duration of torments as are held forth in this doctrine, and think what eternity is, it is ready to seem impossible, that such torments should be inflicted on poor feeble creatures by a Creator of infinite mercy: yet this arises principally from these two causes, (1.) That it is so contrary to the depraved inclinations of mankind, they are so averse to the truth of this doctrine, they hate to believe it, and cannot bear it should be true. (2.) That they see not the suitableness of eternal punishment to the evil of sin; they see not that eternal punishment is proportionable and no more than proportionable to the demerit of sin.

Having thus shown that the eternal punishment of the wicked is not inconsistent with the divine perfections, I shall now proceed further, and show that it is so far from being inconsistent with the divine perfections, that those perfections evidently require it; i. e. they require that sin should have so great a punishment, either in the person who has committed it, or in a surety; and therefore with respect to those who believe not in the surety, and have no interest in him, the divine perfections require that this punishment should be inflicted on them.

This appears, as it is not only not unsuitable that sin should be thus punished; but it is positively suitable, decent, and proper. If this be made to appear, that it is positively suitable that sin should be thus punished, then it will follow, that the perfections of God require it; for certainly the perfections of God require that that should be done which is proper to be done. The perfection and excellency of the nature of God require that that should take place which is perfect, excellent and proper in its own nature. But that sin should be punished eternally is such a thing; which appears by the following considerations.

1. It is suitable that God should infinitely hate sin, and be an infinite enemy to it. Sin, as I have before shown, is an infinite evil, and therefore is infinitely odious and detestable. It

is proper that God should hate every evil, and hate it according to its odious and detestable nature. And sin being infinitely evil and odious, it is proper that God should hate it infinitely.

2. If infinite hatred of sin be suitable to the divine character, then the expressions of such hatred are also suitable to his character. If it be suitable that God should hate sin, then it is suitable he should express that hatred. Because that which is suitable to be, is suitable to be expressed; that which is lovely in itself, is lovely when it appears. If it be suitable that God should be an infinite enemy to sin, or that he should hate it infinitely, then it is suitable that he should act as such an enemy. No possible reason can be given why it is not suitable for God to act as such an one, as it is suitable for him to be. If it be suitable that he should hate and have enmity against sin, then it is suitable for him to express that hatred and enmity in that to which hatred and enmity by its own nature tends....But certainly hatred in its own nature tends to opposition, and to set itself against that which is hated, and to procure its evil and not its good: And that in proportion to the hatred. Great hatred naturally tends to the great evil, and infinite hatred to the infinite evil of its object.

Whence it follows, that if it be suitable that there should be infinite hatred of sin in God, as I have shown it is, it is suitable that he should execute an infinite punishment on it; and so the perfections of God require that he should punish sin with an infinite, or which is the same thing, with an eternal punishment.

Thus we see not only the great objection against this doctrine answered, but the truth of the doctrine established by reason.

I now proceed further to establish it by considering the remaining particulars under the doctrine.

II. That eternal death or punishment which God threatens to the wicked, is not annihilation, but an abiding sensible punishment or misery.

The truth of this proposition will appear by the following particulars.

1. The scripture every where represents the punishment of the wicked, as implying very extreme pains and sufferings; but a state of annihilation is no state of suffering at all. Persons annihilated have no sense or feeling of pain or pleasure, and much less do they feel that punishment which carries in it an extreme pain or suffering. They no more suffer to eternity than they did suffer from eternity.

2. It is agreeable both to scripture and reason to suppose, that the wicked will be punished in such a manner, that they shall be sensible of the punishment they are under; that they should be sensible that now God has executed and fulfilled what he threatened, and which they disregarded, and would not believe; that they should know themselves that justice takes place upon them; that they should see and find that God vindicates that Majesty which they despised; that they should see that God is not so despicable a being as they thought him to be; that they should be sensible for what they are punished, while they are under the threatened punishment; that they should be sensible of their own guilt, and should remember their former opportunities and obligations, and should see their own folly and God's justice. If the eternal punishment threatened be eternal annihilation, when it is inflicted, they will never know that it is inflicted; they will never know that God is just in their punishment, or that they have their deserts. And how is this agreeable to the scripture, in which God threatens, that he will repay the wicked to his face, Deut. vii. 10. And to that in Job xxi. 19. 20. Speaking there of God's punishing wicked men, it is said, "God rewardeth him, and he shall know it; his eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty." And to that in Ezekiel xxii. 21, 22. "Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you."

And how it is agreeable to that expression so often annexed to the threatenings of God's wrath against wicked men, *And ye shall know that I am the Lord?*

5. The scripture teaches, that the wicked will suffer different degrees of torment, according to the different aggravations of their sins. Matth. v. 22. "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hellfire." Here Christ teaches us, that the torments of wicked men will be different in different persons, according to the different degrees of their guilt. It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, for Tyre and Sidon, than for the cities where most of Christ's mighty works were wrought. Again, our Lord assures us, That he that knoweth his Lord's will, and prepareth not himself, nor doth according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knoweth not, and committeth things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. These several passages of scripture prove, that there will be different degrees of punishment in hell; which is utterly inconsistent with the supposition, that that punishment consists in annihilation, in which there can be no degrees, but is the same thing to every one who is a subject of it.

4. The scriptures are very express and abundant in this matter, That the eternal punishment of the wicked will consist in sensible misery and torment, and not in annihilation. What is said of Judas is worthy to be observed here, "It had been good for that man if he had not been born;" Matth. xxvi. 24. This seems plainly to teach us, that the punishment of the wicked is such that their existence, upon the whole, is worse than nonexistence. But if their punishment consists merely in annihilation, this is not true. The wicked, in their punishment, are said to *weep*, and *wail*, and *gnash their teeth*; which implies not only real existence, but life, knowledge, and activity, and that they are in a very sensible and exquisite manner affected with their punishment. In Isaiah xxxiii.

14. Sinners in the state of their punishment are represented *to dwell* with everlasting burnings. But if they are only turned into nothing, where is the foundation for this representation? It is absurd to say, that sinners will *dwell* with annihilation; for there is no *dwelling* in the case. It is also absurd to call annihilation a *burning*, which implies a state of existence, sensibility, and extreme pain; whereas in annihilation, there is neither one nor another of these.....The state of the future punishment of the wicked is evidently represented to be a state of existence and sensibility, when it is said, that they shall be cast into a lake of fire and brimstone. How can this expression with any propriety be understood to mean a state of annihilation?....Yea, they are expressly said to *have no rest* day nor night, but to be *tormented* with fire and brimstone for ever and ever. Rev. xx. 10. But annihilation is a state of *rest*, a state in which not the least *torment* can possibly be suffered.....The rich man in hell *lifted up his eyes being in torment*, and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom, and entered into a particular *conversation* with Abraham; all which proves that he was not annihilated.

The spirits of ungodly men before the resurrection are not in a state of annihilation, but in a state of misery; they are spirits in prison, as the Apostle saith of them that were drowned in the flood, 1 Pet. iii. 19.....And this appears very plainly from the instance of the rich man before mentioned, if we consider him as representing the wicked in their separate state between death and the resurrection. But if the wicked even then, are in a state of *torment*, much more will they be, when they shall come to suffer that which is the proper punishment of their sins.

Annihilation is not so great a calamity but that some men have undoubtedly chosen it, rather than such a state of suffering as they have been in even in this life. This was the case of Job, a good man. But if a good man in this world may suffer that which is worse than annihilation, doubtless the proper punishment of the wicked, in which God means to manifest his peculiar abhorrence of their wickedness, will be a ca-

lamity vastly greater still; and therefore cannot be annihilation. That must be a very mean and contemptible testimony of God's wrath towards those who have rebelled against his crown and dignity, have broken his laws, and despised both his vengeance and his grace, which is not so great a calamity as some of his true children have suffered in life.

The eternal punishment of the wicked is said to be the *second death*, once and again, as Rev. xx. 14. and xxi. 8.....It is doubtless called the second death in reference to the death of the body; and as the death of the body is ordinarily attended with great pain and distress, so the like, or something vastly greater, is implied in calling the eternal punishment of the wicked the *second death*; and there would be no propriety in calling it so, if it consisted merely in annihilation. And this second death wicked men will suffer; for it cannot be called the second death with respect to any other than men; it cannot be called so with respect to devils, as they die no temporal death, which is the first death. In Rev. ii. 11. it is said, "He that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second death;" implying, that all who do not overcome their lusts, but live in sin, shall suffer the second death.

Again, wicked men will suffer the same kind of death with the devils; as in verse 25th of the context, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Now the punishment of the devil is not annihilation, but torment; he therefore trembles for fear of it; not for fear of being annihilated, he would be glad of that. What he is afraid of is torment, as appears by Luke viii. 28. Where he cries out, and beseeches Christ, that he would not *torment* him before the time: And it is said, Rev. xx. 10. The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be *tormented* day and night, for ever and ever.

It is strange how men will go directly against so plain and full revelations of scripture, as to suppose, notwithstanding all these things, that the eternal punishment threatened against the wicked signifies no more than annihilation.

III. As the future punishment of the wicked consists in sensible misery; so it shall not only continue for a very long time, but shall be absolutely without end.

Of those who have held that the torments of hell are not absolutely eternal, there have been two sorts. (1.) Some suppose, that in the threatenings of everlasting punishment, the terms used do not necessarily import a proper eternity, but only a very long duration. (2.) Others suppose, that if they do import a proper eternity, yet we cannot necessarily conclude thence, that God will fulfil his threatenings.

Therefore I shall,

FIRST, Show that the threatenings of eternal punishment do very plainly and fully import a proper, absolute eternity, and not merely a long duration.

This appears,

1. Because when the scripture speaks of the wicked's being sentenced to their punishment at the time when all temporal things are come to an end, it then speaks of it as everlasting, as in the text, and elsewhere.....It is true that the term for ever is not always in scripture used to signify eternity. Sometimes it means, as long as a man liveth. In this sense it is said, that the Hebrew servant, who chose to abide with his master, should have his ear bored, and should serve his master for ever.....Sometimes it means, during the continuance of the state and church of the Jews. In this sense, several laws, which were peculiar to that church, and were to continue in force no longer than that church should last, are called *statutes for ever*. See Exod. xxvii. 21. chap. xxviii. 43, &c.....Sometimes it means as long as the world stands. So in Eccles. i. 4. One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth *for ever*.

And this last is the longest temporal duration that such a term is ever used to signify. There is no instance of using such a term, for a longer duration, when it signifies a temporal duration: For the duration of the world is doubtless the longest of any of those things that are temporal, as its beginning was the earliest of any of those things that are temporal.

Therefore when the scripture speaks of things as being before the foundation of the world, it means that they existed from eternity, and before the beginning of time. So those things which continue after the end of the world, are eternal things, and are after the end of time.....Doubtless when the temporal world is at an end, there will be an end to temporal things. When the time comes that heaven and earth are shaken and removed, those things that remain will be things that cannot be shaken, but will remain for ever. Heb. xii. 26, 27.....This visible world contains all things that are seen and are temporal; and therefore when that is at an end, there will be an end of all things that are temporal, and therefore the things that remain after that will be eternal.

But the punishment of the wicked will not only remain after the end of the world, but is called everlasting after that, as in the text, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." So in 2 Thess. i. 9, 10. "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints," &c.....Now, what can be meant by a thing's being everlasting, after all temporal things are come to an end, but that it is absolutely without end?

2. Such expressions are used to set forth the duration of the punishment of the wicked, as are never used in the scriptures of the New Testament to signify any thing but a proper eternity. It is said, not only that that punishment shall be for ever, but for ever and ever. Rev. xiv. 11.; "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever."....Rev. xx. 10.; "Shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever."....Doubtless the New Testament has some expression to signify a proper eternity, of which it has so often occasion to speak. But it is ignorant of any higher expression than this: If this do not signify an absolute eternity, there is none that does.

3. The scripture uses the same way of speaking to set forth the eternity of the punishment of the wicked, that it uses to set forth the eternity of the happiness of the righteous,

or the eternity of God himself. Matth. xxv. 46. These shall go away into *everlasting* punishment; but the righteous into life *eternal*.....The words *everlasting* and *eternal*, in the original, are the very same. Rev. xxii. 5. And they (the saints) shall reign for ever and ever. And the scripture has no higher expression to signify the eternity of God himself, than that of his being for ever and ever; as Rev. iv. 9. "To him who sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever," and in the 10th verse, and in chap. v. 14, and chap. x. 6, and chap. xv. 7.

Again, the scripture expresses God's eternity by this, that it shall be for ever, after the world is come to an end; Psalm cii. 26, 27. "They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end."

4. The scripture says, that wicked men shall not be delivered, till they have paid the uttermost farthing of their debt; Matth. v. 26. Nor till they have paid the last mite; Luke x. 59, i. e. the utmost that is deserved, and all mercy is excluded by this expression. But we have shown that they deserve an infinite, an endless punishment.

5. The scripture says absolutely, that their punishment shall not have an end; Mark ix. 44. "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Now, it will not do to say, that the meaning is, Their worm shall live a great while, or that it shall be a great while before their fire is quenched. If ever the time comes that their worm shall die; if ever there shall be a quenching of the fire at all, then it is not true that their worm dieth not, and that the fire is not quenched. For if there be a dying of the worm, and a quenching of the fire, let it be at what time it will, nearer or further off, it is equally contrary to such a negation, *it dieth not, it is not quenched.*

SECONDLY, There are others who allow, that the expressions of the threatenings do denote a proper eternity; but then, they say, it doth not certainly follow, that the punish-

ment will really be eternal; because, say they, God may threaten, and yet not fulfil his threatenings. Though they allow that the threatenings are positive and peremptory, without any reserve, yet they say, God is not obliged to fulfil absolute positive threatenings, as he is absolute promises, because in promises a right is conveyed that the creature to whom the promises are made will claim; but there is no danger of the creature's claiming any right by a threatening.....Therefore I am now to show, That what God has positively declared in this matter, does indeed make it certain, that it shall be as he has declared. To this end, I shall mention two things;

1. It is self evidently contrary to the divine truth, positively to declare any thing to be real, whether past, present, or to come, which God at the same time knows is not so. Absolutely threatening that any thing shall be, is the same as absolutely declaring that it is to be. For any to suppose, that God absolutely declares that any thing will be, which he at the same time knows will not be, is blasphemy, if there be any such thing as blasphemy.

Indeed, it is very true, that there is no obligation on God, arising from the claim of the creature, as there is in promises. They seem to reckon the wrong way, who suppose the necessity of the execution of the threatening to arise from a proper obligation on God to the creature to execute consequent on his threatening. For indeed the certainty of the execution arises the other way, viz. on the obligation there was on the omniscient God, in threatening, to conform his threatening to what he knew would be future in execution. Though, strictly speaking, God is not properly obliged to the creature to execute, because he has threatened, yet he was obliged not absolutely to threaten, if at the same time he knew that he should not, or would not fulfil, because this would not have been consistent with his truth.....So that from the truth of God there is an inviolable connexion between positive threatenings and execution. They that suppose that God absolutely threatened, or positively declared, that he would do contrary to what he knew would come to pass, do therein suppose,

that he absolutely threatened contrary to what he knew to be truth. And how any one can speak contrary to what he knows to be truth, in declaring, promising, or threatening, or any other way, consistently with inviolable truth, is inconceivable.

Threatenings are significations of something; and if they are made consistently with truth, they are true significations, or significations of truth, or significations of that which shall be. If absolute threatenings are significations of any thing, they are significations of the futurity of the things threatened. But if the futurity of the things threatened be not true and real, then how can the threatening be a true signification? And if God, in them, speaks contrary to what he knows, and contrary to what he intends, how he can speak true is inconceivable.

Absolute threatenings are a kind of predictions; and though God is not properly obliged by any claim of ours to fulfil predictions, unless they are of the nature of promises; yet it certainly would be contrary to truth, to predict and say such a thing would come to pass, which he knew at the same time would not come to pass. Threatenings are declarations of something future, and they must be declarations of future truth, if they are true declarations. Its being future alters not the case any more than if it were present. It is equally contrary to truth, to declare contrary to what at the same time is known to be truth, whether it be of things past, present, or to come; for all are alike to God.

Beside, we have often declarations in scripture of the future eternal punishment of the wicked, in the proper form of predictions, and not in the form of threatenings. So in the text, These shall go away into everlasting punishment. So in those frequent assertions of eternal punishment in the Revelation, some of which I have already quoted. The Revelation is a prophecy, and is so called in the book itself; so are those declarations of eternal punishment.....The like declarations we have also in many other places of scripture.

2. The doctrine of those who teach, that it is not certain that God will fulfil those absolute threatenings, is blaspho-

mous another way; and that is, as God, according to their supposition, was obliged to make use of a fallacy to govern the world. They own, that it is needful that men should apprehend themselves liable to an eternal punishment, that they might thereby be restrained from sin, and that God has threatened such a punishment, for the very end that they might believe themselves exposed to it. But what an unworthy opinion does this convey of God and his government, of his infinite majesty, and wisdom, and all sufficiency!....Beside, they suppose, that though God has made use of such a fallacy, yet it is not such an one but that they have detected him in it. Though God intended men should believe it to be certain, that sinners are liable to an eternal punishment; yet they suppose, that they have been so cunning as to find out that it is not certain; and so that God had not laid his design so deep, but that such cunning men as they can discern the cheat, and defeat the design; because they have found out, that there is no necessary connexion between the threatening of eternal punishment, and the execution of that threatening.

Considering these things, it is not greatly to be wondered at, that the great Archbishop Tillotson, who has made so great a figure among the new fashioned divines, should advance such an opinion as this?

Before I conclude this head, it may be proper for me to answer an objection or two, that may arise in the minds of some.

1. It may be here said, We have instances wherein God hath not fulfilled his threatenings; as his threatening to Adam, and in him to mankind, that they should *surely* die, if they should eat the forbidden fruit. I answer, it is not true that God did not fulfil that threatening: He fulfilled it, and will fulfil it in every jot and tittle.....When God said, "Thou shalt surely die," if we respect spiritual death, it was fulfilled in Adam's person in the day that he ate. God immediately took away his image, his Holy Spirit, and original righteousness, which was the highest and best life of our first parents; and they were immediately in a doleful state of spiritual death,

If we respect temporal death, that was also fulfilled: He brought death upon himself and all his posterity, and he virtually suffered that death on that very day on which he ate. His body was brought into a corruptible, mortal, and dying condition, and so it continued till it was dissolved.....If we look at eternal death, and indeed all that death which was comprehended in the threatening, it was, properly speaking, fulfilled in Christ. When God said to Adam, If thou eatest, thou shalt die, he spake not only to him, and of him personally; but the words respected mankind, Adam and his race, and doubtless were so understood by him. His offspring were to be looked upon as sinning in him, and so should die with him. The words do as justly allow of an imputation of death as of sin; they are as well consistent with dying in a surety as with sinning in one. Therefore, the threatening is fulfilled in the death of Christ, the surety.

2. Another objection may arise from God's threatening to Nineveh. He threatened, that in forty days Nineveh should be destroyed, which yet he did not fulfil.....I answer, that threatening could justly be looked upon no otherwise than as conditional. It was of the nature of a warning, and not of an absolute denunciation. Why was Jonah sent to the Ninevites, but to give them warning, that they might have opportunity to repent, reform, and avert the approaching destruction? God had no other design or end in sending the prophet to them, but that they might be warned and tried by him, as God warned the Israelites, and warned Judah and Jerusalem before their destruction. Therefore the prophets, together with their prophecies of approaching destruction, joined earnest exhortations to repent and reform, that it might be averted.

No more could justly be understood to be certainly threatened, than that Nineveh should be destroyed in forty days, *continuing as it was.* For it was for their wickedness that that destruction was threatened, and so the Ninevites took it. Therefore, when the cause was removed, the effect ceased..... It was contrary to God's known manner, to threaten punish-

ment and destruction for sin here in this world absolutely; so that it should come upon the persons threatened unavoidably, let them repent and reform and do what they would; agreeably to Jer. xviii. 7, 8. "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation against whom I have pronounced turn from their evil I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." So that all threatenings of this nature had a condition implied in them, according to the known and declared manner of God's dealing. And the Ninevites did not take it as an absolute sentence or denunciation: If they had they would have despaired of any benefit by fasting and reformation.

But the threatenings of eternal wrath are positive and absolute. There is nothing in the word of God from which we can gather any condition. The only opportunity of escaping is in this world; this is the only state of trial wherein we have any offers of mercy, or there is any place for repentance.

IV. I shall mention several good and important ends, which will be obtained by the eternal punishment of the wicked:

1. Hereby God vindicates his injured majesty. Wherein sinners cast contempt upon it, and trample it in the dust, God vindicates and honors it, and makes it appear, as it is indeed, infinite, by showing that it is infinitely dreadful to contemn or offend it.

2. God glorifies his justice. The glory of God is the greatest good; it is that which is the chief end of the creation; it is a thing of greater importance than any thing else. But this is one way wherein God will glorify himself, as in the eternal destruction of ungodly men, he will glorify his justice. Therein he will appear as a just governor of the world. The vindictive justice of God will apppear strict, exact, awful, and terrible, and therefore glorious.

3. God hereby indirectly glorifies his grace on the vessels of mercy. The saints in heaven will behold the torments of the damned: "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." Isa. lxvi. 24. "And they shall go forth and

look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me : For their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." And in Rev. xiv. 10. It is said, that they shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. So they will be tormented in the presence also of the glorified saints.

Hereby the saints will be made the more sensible how great their salvation is. When they shall see how great the misery is from which God hath saved them, and how great a difference he hath made between their state, and the state of others, who were by nature, and perhaps by practice, no more sinful and ill deserving than they, it will give them more of a sense of the wonderfulness of God's grace to them. Every time they look upon the damned, it will excite in them a lively and admiring sense of the grace of God, in making them so to differ. This the apostle informs us is one end of the damnation of ungodly men; Rom. ix. 22, 23. " What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction : And that he might make known *the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy*, which he had afore prepared unto glory ?" The view of the misery of the damned will double the ardor of the love and gratitude of the saints in heaven.

4. The sight of hell torments will exalt the happiness of the saints for ever. It will not only make them more sensible of the greatness and freeness of the grace of God in their happiness ; but it will really make their happiness the greater, as it will make them more sensible of their own happiness ; it will give them a more lively relish of it ; it will make them prize it more. When they see others, who were of the same nature, and born under the same circumstances, plunged in such misery, and they so distinguished, O it will make them sensible how happy they are. A sense of the opposite misery, in all cases, greatly increases the relish of any joy or pleasure.

The sight of the wonderful power, the great and dreadful majesty, and awful justice and holiness of God, manifested in the eternal punishment of ungodly men, will make them prize his favor and love vastly the more; and they will be so much the more happy in the enjoyment of it.

APPLICATION.

1. From what hath been said, we may learn the folly and madness of the greater part of mankind, in that for the sake of present momentary gratification, they run the venture of enduring all these eternal torments. They prefer a small pleasure, or a little wealth, or a little earthly honor and greatness, which can last but for a moment, to an escape from this punishment. If it be true that the torments of hell are eternal, what will it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? What is there in this world, which is not a trifle, and lighter than vanity, in comparison with these eternal things?

How mad are men, who so often hear of these things and pretend to believe them; who can live but a little while, a few years; who do not even expect to live here longer than others of their species ordinarily do; and who yet are careless about what becomes of themselves in another world, where there is no change and no end! How mad are they, when they hear that if they go on in sin, they shall be eternally miserable, that they are not moved by it, but hear it with as much carelessness and coldness as if they were no way concerned in the matter; when they know not but that it may be their case, that they may be suffering these torments before a week is at an end, and that if it should be so, it would be no strange thing, no other than a common thing!

How can men be so careless of such a matter as their own eternal and desperate destruction and torment! What a strange stupor and senselessness possesses the hearts of men! How common a thing is it to see men, who are told from Sab-

bath to Sabbath of eternal misery, and who are as mortal as other men, so careless about it, that they seem not to be at all restrained by it from whatever their souls lust after! It is not half so much their care to escape eternal misery, as it is to get money and land, and to be considerable in the world, and to gratify their senses. Their thoughts are much more exercised about these things, and much more of their care and concern is about them. Eternal misery, though they lie every day exposed to it, is a thing neglected, it is but now and then thought of, and then with a great deal of stupidity, and not with concern enough to stir them up to do any thing considerable in order to escape it. They are not sensible that it is worth their while to take any considerable pains in order to it. And if they do take pains for a little while, they soon leave off, and something else takes up their thoughts and concern.

Thus you will see it to be among young and old. Multitudes of those who are in youth, lead a careless life, taking little care about their salvation. So you may see it to be among persons of middle age. So it is still with many, when advanced in years, and when they certainly draw near to the grave. Yet these same persons will seem to acknowledge, that the greater part of men go to hell and suffer eternal misery, and this through carelessness about it. However they will do the same. How strange is it that men can enjoy themselves and be at rest, when they are thus hanging over eternal burnings; at the same time, having no lease of their lives, and not knowing how soon the thread by which they hang will break, nor do they pretend to know; and if it breaks, they are gone, they are lost for ever, and there is no remedy! Yet they trouble not themselves much about it; nor will they hearken to those who cry to them, and intreat them to take care for themselves, and labor to get out of that dangerous condition: They are not willing to take so much pains: They choose not to be diverted from amusing themselves with those toys and vanities which they have in hand. Thus well might the wise man say, as in Eccles. ix. 3. "The heart of

the sons of men is full of evil. Madness is in their heart while they live; and after that they go to the dead."

How much wiser are those few, who make it their main business to lay a foundation for eternity, to secure their salvation!

2. I shall improve this subject in an use of exhortation to sinners, to take care to escape these eternal torments. If they be eternal, one would think that would be enough to awaken your concern, and excite your diligence. If the punishment be eternal, it is infinite, as we said before; and therefore no other evil, no death, no temporary torment that ever you heard of, or that you can imagine, is any thing in comparison with it, but is as much less and less considerable, not only as a grain of sand is less than the whole universe, but as it is less than the boundless space which encompasses the universe. Therefore here,

(1.) Be entreated to consider attentively how great and awful a thing eternity is. Although you cannot comprehend it the more by considering, yet you may be made more sensible that it is not a thing to be disregarded. Do but consider what it is to suffer extreme torment for ever and ever; to suffer it day and night, from one day to another, from one year to another, from one age to another, from one thousand ages to another, and so adding age to age, and thousands to thousands, in pain, in wailing and lamenting, groaning and shrieking, and gnashing your teeth; with your souls full of dreadful grief and amazement, with your bodies and every member full of racking torture, without any possibility of getting ease; without any possibility of moving God to pity by your cries; without any possibility of hiding yourselves from him; without any possibility of diverting your thoughts from your pain; without any possibility of obtaining any manner of mitigation, or help, or change for the better any way.

(2.) Do but consider how dreadful despair will be in such torment. How dismal will it be, when you are under these racking torments, to know assuredly that you never, never shall be delivered from them; to have no hope: When you

shall wish that you might but be turned into nothing, but shall have no hope of it; when you shall wish that you might be turned into a toad or a serpent, but shall have no hope of it; when you would rejoice, if you might but have any relief, after you shall have endured these torments millions of ages, but shall have no hope of it; when after you shall have worn out the age of the sun, moon, and stars, in your dolorous groans and lamentations, without rest day or night, or one minute's ease, yet you shall have no hope of ever being delivered; when after you shall have worn out a thousand more such ages, yet you shall have no hope, but shall know that you are not one whit nearer to the end of your torments; but that still there are the same groans, the same shrieks, the same doleful cries, incessantly to be made by you, and that the smoke of your torment shall still ascend up for ever and ever; and that your souls, which shall have been agitated with the wrath of God all this while, yet will still exist to bear more wrath; your bodies, which shall have been burning and roasting all this while in these glowing flames, yet shall not have been consumed, but will remain to roast through an eternity yet, which will not have been at all shortened by what shall have been past.

You may by considering make yourselves more sensible than you ordinarily are; but it is a little you can conceive of what it is to have no hope in such torments.

How sinking would it be to you, to endure such pain as you have felt in this world, without any hopes, and to know that you never should be delivered from it, nor have one minute's rest! You can now scarcely conceive how doleful that would be. How much more to endure the vast weight of the wrath of God without hope! The more the damned in hell think of the eternity of their torments, the more amazing will it appear to them; and alas! They are not able to avoid thinking of it, they will not be able to keep it out of their minds. Their tortures will not divert them from it, but will fix their attention to it. O how dreadful will eternity appear to them after they shall have been thinking on it

for ages together, and shall have had so long an experience of their torments!....The damned in hell will have two infinites perpetually to amaze them, and swallow them up: One is an infinite God, whose wrath they will bear, and whom they will behold their perfect and irreconcilable enemy. The other is the infinite duration of their torment.

If it were possible for the damned in hell to have a comprehensive knowledge of eternity, their sorrow and grief would be infinite in degree. The comprehensive view of so much sorrow which they must endure, would cause infinite grief for the present. Though they will not have a comprehensive knowledge of it, yet they will doubtless have a vastly more lively and strong apprehension of it than we can have in this world. Their torments will give them an impression of it. A man in his present state, without any enlargement of his capacity, would have a vastly more lively impression of eternity than he has, if he were only under some pretty sharp pain in some member of his body, and were at the same time assured, that he must endure that pain for ever. His pain would give him a greater sense of eternity than other men have. How much more will those excruciating torments, which the damned will suffer, have this effect!

Beside, their capacity will probably be enlarged, their understandings will be quicker and stronger in a future state; and God can give them as great a sense and as strong an impression of eternity, as he pleases, to increase their grief and torment.

O be intreated ye that are in a Christless state, and are going on in a way to hell, that are daily exposed to damnation, to consider these things. If you do not, it will surely be but a little while before you will experience them, and then you will know how dreadful it is to despair in hell; and it may be before this year, or this month, or this week, is at an end; before another Sabbath, or ever you shall have opportunity to hear another sermon.

(3.) That you may effectually escape these dreadful and eternal torments, be intreated to flee to, and embrace him who

came into the world for the very end of saving sinners from these torments, who has paid the whole debt due to the divine law and exhausted eternal in temporal sufferings. What great encouragement is it to those of you who are sensible that you are exposed to eternal punishment, that there is a Saviour provided, who is able and who freely offers to save you from that punishment, and that in a way which is perfectly consistent with the glory of God, yea which is more to the glory of God than it would be if you should suffer the eternal punishment of hell. For if you should suffer that punishment you would never pay the whole of the debt. Those who are sent to hell never will have paid the whole of the debt which they owe to God, nor indeed a part which bears any proportion to the whole. They never will have paid a part which bears so great a proportion to the whole, as one mite to ten thousand talents. Justice therefore never can be actually satisfied in your damnation; but it is actually satisfied in Christ. Therefore he is accepted of the Father, and therefore all who believe are accepted and justified in him. Therefore believe in him, come to him, commit your souls to him to be saved by him. In him you shall be safe from the eternal torments of hell. Nor is that all: But through him you shall inherit inconceivable blessedness and glory, which will be of equal duration with the torments of hell. For as at the last day, the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, so shall the righteous, or those who trust in Christ, go into life eternal.

SERMON XI.*

The Unreasonableness of Indetermination in Religion.

1 KINGS, xviii. 21.

AND ELIJAH CAME UNTO ALL THE PEOPLE, AND SAID, HOW LONG HALT YE BETWEEN TWO OPINIONS? IF THE LORD BE GOD, FOLLOW HIM; BUT IF BAAL, THEN FOLLOW HIM. AND THE PEOPLE ANSWERED HIM NOT A WORD.

IT is the manner of God, before he bestows any signal or remarkable mercy on a people, first to prepare them for it; and before he removes any awful judgments which he hath brought upon them for their sins, first to cause them to forsake those sins which procured those judgments. We have an instance of this in the chapter wherein is the text.

It was a time of sore famine in Israel. There had been neither rain nor dew for the space of three years and six months. This famine was brought upon the land for their idolatry. But God was now about to remove this judgment; and therefore, to prepare them for it, sent Elijah to convince them of the folly of idolatry, and to bring them to repentance of it.....In order to this, Elijah, by the command of the Lord, goes and shows himself to Ahab, and directs him to send and gather all Israel to him at Mount Carmel, and all the prophets of Baal, four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the

* Dated June, 1734.

groves that eat at Jezebel's table, four hundred, that they might determine the matter and bring the controversy to an issue, whether Jehovah or Baal were God.....To this end, Elijah proposes, that each should take a bullock, that he should take one, and the prophets of Baal another, that each should cut his bullock in pieces, lay it on the wood, and put no fire under; and that the God who should answer by fire should be concluded to be God.

The text contains an account of what Elijah said to all the people at their first meeting, and of their silence: "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." To which the people, it seems, made no reply. In these words, we may observe,

1. How Elijah expostulates with the people about their halting so long between two opinions; in which expostulation may be observed,

(1.) What the two opinions were, between which they halted, viz. Whether the Lord were God, or whether Baal were God. The case in Israel seems to have been this; there were some who were altogether for Baal and wholly rejected the true God; of which number, to be sure, were Jezebel and the prophets of Baal. And there were some among them who were altogether for the God of Israel, and wholly rejected Baal; as God told Elijah, that "he had yet left in Israel seven thousand that had not bowed the knee to Baal, and whose mouths had not kissed him," 1 Kings xix. 18.

But the rest of the people halted between two opinions. They saw that some were for one, and some for the other, and they did not know which to choose; and, as is commonly the case when difference of opinion prevails, there were many who had no religion at all; they were not settled in any thing; the different opinions prevalent in Israel distracted and confounded them.....Many who professed to believe in the true God, were yet very cold and indifferent, and many were wavering and unsettled. They saw that the king and queen were for Baal; and Baal's party was the prevailing party; but

their forefathers had been for the Lord; and they knew not which was right. Thus they halted between two opinions.

(2.) In this expostulation is implied the unreasonableness of their thus halting between two opinions....." How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." Which implies that they ought to determine one way or the other.

2. We may observe their silence on this occasion: " And the people answered him not a word," as being convicted in their own consciences of the unreasonableness of their being for so long a time wavering and unresolved: They had nothing to reply in excuse for themselves.

DOCTRINE. The unresolvedness of many persons in religion is very unreasonable.

I. PROP. Many persons remain exceedingly undetermined with respect to the things of religion. They are very much undetermined in themselves whether to embrace religion or to reject it.....Many who are baptised, and make a profession of religion, and seem to be Christians, are yet in their own minds halting between two opinions: They never yet came fully to a conclusion whether to be Christians or not. They are taught the Christian religion in their childhood, and have the Bible, the word preached, and the means of grace all their days, yet continue, and grow up, and many grow old, in an unresolvedness, whether to embrace Christianity or not; and many continue unresolved as long as they live.

1. There are some persons who have never come to a settled determination in their own minds, whether or no there be any truth in religion. They hear of the things of religion from their childhood all their days; but never come to a conclusion in their own minds, whether they be real or fabulous. Particularly, some have never come to any determination in their own minds, whether there be any such thing as conversion. They hear much talk about it, and know that many pretend to be the subjects of it; but they are never resolved

whether all be not mere designed hypocrisy and imposture, or the mere notions of whimsical persons.

Some never come to any determination whether the Scriptures be the word of God, or whether they be the invention of men; and whether the story concerning Jesus Christ be any thing but a fable. They fear it is true, but sometimes very much doubt of it. Sometimes, when they hear arguments for it, they give an assent to it, that it is true; but upon every little objection or temptation arising, they call it in question; and are always wavering and never settled about it.

So it seems to have been with many of the Jews in Christ's time; they were always at a loss what to make of him, whether he were indeed the Christ, or whether he were Elias, or one of the old prophets, or a mere impostor. John x. 24, 25. "Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not."....Some have never so much as come to a resolution in their own minds, whether there be a God or not. They know not that there is, and oftentimes very much doubt of it.

2. There are some who never have come to any determination in their own minds whether to embrace religion in the practice of it. Religion consists not merely, or chiefly in theory or speculation, but in practice. It is a practical thing; the end of it is to guide and influence us in our practice; and considered in this view, there are multitudes who never have come to a conclusion whether to embrace religion or not..... It is probably pretty general for men to design to be religious some time or other before they die; for none intend to go to hell. But they still keep it at a distance; they put it off from time to time, and never come to any conclusion which determines them in their present practice. And some never so much as fix upon any time. They design to be religious some time before they die, but they know not when.

There are many who have always hitherto continued unresolved about the necessity of striving and being earnestly en-

gaged for salvation. They flatter themselves that they may obtain salvation, though they be not so earnestly engaged; though they mind the world and their worldly affairs more than their salvation. They are often told how necessary it is that they make haste and not delay, that they do whatever their hand findeth to do with their might, that they be violent, that a dull, slack way of seeking salvation is never like to be effectual. But of these things they are never thoroughly convinced. Some seem to resolve to be in earnest, and seem to set out with some engagedness of mind; but soon fail, because they have never been fully convinced of the necessity of it.

Many have never come to a determination what to choose for their portion. There are but two things which God offers to mankind for their portion: One is this world, with the pleasures and profits of sin, together with eternal misery ensuing: The other is heaven and eternal glory, with a life of selfdenial and respect to all the commands of God preceding. Many, as long as they live, come to no settled determination which of these to choose. They must have one or the other, they cannot have both; but they always remain in suspense, and never make their choice.

They would fain have heaven and this world too; they would have salvation and the pleasures and profits of sin too. But considering heaven and the world, as God offers them, they will have neither. God offers heaven, only with the selfdenial and difficulty which are in the way to it; and they are not willing to have heaven on these conditions. God offers the world and the pleasures of sin to men not alone, but with eternal misery in connexion with them; and so neither are they willing to have the world. They would fain divide heaven from the holiness and selfdenial which are the way to it, and from the holiness which reigns in it, and then they would be glad to have heaven. They would fain divide sin from hell, and then they would fully determine for ever to cleave to sin.

But God will not make such a division for them. They must have one or the other of these for their portion, as God

offers; and therefore they never make any choice at all.....Indeed they do practically and in effect choose sin and hell. But they do not come to any resolution in their *own minds* which they will have for their portion, whether heaven and holiness, or the world and hell: They are always wavering and halting between two opinions. Sometimes they seem to determine for the one, and sometimes for the other. In times wherein they meet with no difficulty, or temptation, and can, as they say, do their duty without hurting themselves, or much crossing their carnal inclinations, they seem to choose heaven and holiness. At other times, wherein they meet with difficulty in the way of duty, and great temptations of worldly profits or pleasures are laid before them, then they choose the world, and let heaven and holiness alone.....There are among us vast multitudes, before whom these two things have been set hundreds of times, who have never to this day come to a determination which to have.

So they have never yet determined which shall be their master, whether God or mammon. There are but few who have undertaken the service of God, and are come to a resolution and preparedness of mind to serve God and follow Christ at all times, and to whatever difficulties it may expose them. Yet at the same time neither are they determined that they will continue to serve Satan: They are afraid to draw up such a conclusion. Thus many spend away their lives without making their choice, putting that off, though they do in the mean time practically choose the service of Satan. These are the persons of whom the Apostle James speaks in chap. i. 8. "The doubleminded man is unstable in all his ways."

II. To continue thus undetermined and unresolved in the things of religion, is very unreasonable, and that upon the following accounts.

1. The things of religion are things wherein we are to the highest degree interested. The truth or falsehood of the doctrines of religion concerns us to the highest degree possible. It is no matter of indifference to us whether there be a God

or not; or whether the scriptures be the word of God; or whether Christ be the son of God; or whether there be any such thing as conversion. It makes infinite odds to us whether these things be so or not. Therefore we are under the greatest obligation in point of interest to resolve in our minds whether they be true or false. They who are undetermined whether there be any truth in religion, and are contented to be so, not inquiring, nor thoroughly using the means to be determined, act very unreasonably. They remain in doubt whether there be any such thing as an heaven or hell; are quiet and easy to continue ignorant in this matter; are not engaged in their minds to come to a determination; do not search and inquire what arguments there are to prove any such things; nor diligently weigh and consider the force of them; but busy their minds about other things of infinitely less importance; and act as if they thought it did not much concern them, whether there be a future and eternal state.

If they think that there is not, yet it is a matter of so great importance, that no wise man would rest until he had satisfied himself; because if there be such a future state as the scriptures tell us of, then we must have our part in it, either in a state of eternal rewards, or in a state of eternal punishment. So it is no matter of indifference to us what we have for our portion, whether this world with hell, or a life of holiness and selfdenial with heaven. These opposite portions relate not merely to a few days in this world, but they relate to eternity. It is infinite madness therefore not to come to a determination.

So it is no matter of indifference what master we serve, whether God or mammon; or what interest we will pursue, whether our temporal or eternal interest; or which we prefer, the commands of God, or our pleasures, our ease and convenience. Doubtless it will make a vast odds one way or the other. We ought therefore to come to some determination which we will choose.

2. God hath made us reasonable creatures, and capable of rationally determining for ourselves. God hath made us ca-

pable of a good acquaintance with those things which do especially concern our interest. Doubtless God hath made man capable of discovering the truth in matters of religion, of coming to a good determination in these questions, whether the scriptures be the word of God, whether there be a future state, and the like. The resolution of these questions, which it so much concerns us to determine, is not above our capacities. God hath not set these things beyond the extent of our faculties.

So God hath made us capable of making a wise choice for ourselves, as to the life which we shall choose to lead. He hath given man so much understanding, as to make him capable of determining which is best; to lead a life of selfdenial and enjoy eternal happiness, or to take our swing in sinful enjoyments and burn in hell forever. The question is of no difficult determination. It is so far from being a matter too hard for our reason, that the reason of a child is sufficient to determine this matter. Therefore men in remaining undetermined in these matters, do not act as reasonable creatures, but make themselves like "the horse and the mule, which have no understanding," Psalm xxxii. 9.

3. God puts into our hands an happy opportunity to determine for ourselves. What better opportunity can a man desire to consult his own interest, than to have liberty to choose his own portion? God setteth life and death before us. Deut. xxx. 19. "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that thou and thy seed after thee may live." See also Ezek. xviii. 31, 32, and chap. xxxiii. 11. What better opportunity can we desire for securing to ourselves the greatest good, than to have eternal life and unchangeable happiness set before us, and offered to our choice? Therefore those who neglect coming to a resolution, act unreasonably, because they stand so much in their own light, and miss so glorious an opportunity.

4. The things among which we are to make our choice are but few in number; there are but two portions set before

us, one of which must be our portion; either life or death, either blessing or cursing; either a life of universal and persevering obedience with eternal glory; or a worldly, carnal, wicked life, with eternal misery. If there were many terms in the offer made us, many things of nearly an equal value, one of which we must choose, to remain long in suspense and undetermined would be more excusable; there would be more reason for long deliberation before we should fix. But there are but two terms, there are but two states in another world, in one or the other of which we must be fixed to all eternity.

And there are but two states in this world, a state of sin, and a state of holiness, a natural state, and a converted state. There is but one way in which we can come to life, which renders the determination of reason much the easier. There are but two masters, to one of which we must be reputed the servants, Baal and Jehovah, God and mammon: There are but two competitors for the possession of us, Christ and the devil. There are but two paths, in one of which you are to travel, either in the strait and narrow way which leadeth unto life, or the broad way which leadeth unto destruction.

This shows the unreasonableness of those who live under light, and have the offers of the gospel made to them, and yet remain from year to year unfixed and undetermined, halting between two opinions.

5. God hath given us all needed helps to determine us. We have all needed helps to determine our understandings, as to the truth of the things of religion, as whether there be a God, whether the scriptures be the word of God, whether there be a future state, &c. We are not left in the dark as to these things, as the poor heathen are, who are under great disadvantages to come to the knowledge of the truth, though they be not under an impossibility, for *they may haply feel after God and find him*, Acts xvii. 27. But we have a clear sunshine to guide us, we have a particular description of those things which are set before us for truth, and have great opportunity to examine them. The scripture lies open before

us, and all the doctrines of the gospel are particularly set forth, with the reasons on which their evidence is founded. We may search and try their force and sufficiency, as we will.

We have great helps to a wise and rational determination in our choice; to determine whether it be best for us to choose a life of sin or a life of holiness, the service of God or the service of Baal. We have very plainly set before us the advantages of both sides; the loss and gain are particularly stated. Christ hath dealt by us faithfully, and hath told us what we shall get, and what we shall lose, by being his followers. He hath also told us what we shall get, and what we shall lose by a life of sin. He hath not dealt by us deceitfully. He hath not pretended greater advantages in godliness than there really are, nor greater disadvantages or dangers in sin. John xiv. 2. "In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you."

He hath told us plainly that we must take up the cross daily and follow him; that we must hate father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, and our own life also, in order to become his disciples; and that we must cut off our right hands, and pluck out our right eyes, in order to enter into heaven. Thus we have a fair opportunity to count the cost on both sides, and are directed so to do; Luke xiv. 28. How unreasonable therefore is it for men who have all these helps and advantages, to remain in suspense, and to come to no conclusion whether they will be Christians or heathens, whether they will be for God or the devil; though they have lived under the preaching of the word and offers of the gospel for many years.

6. We have no reason to expect to be under better advantages to determine hereafter than we are now. We never shall have a clearer revelation of gospel truth; never shall have the advantages and disadvantages of both sides more plainly set before us, than they are already in the word of God; nor are we ever like to be under better advantages to know what will be best for us, and most for our interest. Those therefore who delay, gain nothing by their de-

lays, but give Satan more opportunity to darken their minds, to deceive them, and lead them astray in their choice. Therefore their delay of coming to a resolution is unreasonable.

7. If they come not to a determination in this life, God will determine for them, and appoint them their portion with the wicked. If sinners, by refusing to choose either life or death, either heaven or hell, could thereby avoid both, or if in this case the matter would remain undetermined till they should determine it; the folly and unreasonableness of delaying a determination would not be so great. But that is not the case; if they go on halting between two opinions, God will determine for them, and that quickly; he will determine where their portion shall be, viz. among the unbelievers, in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone forever. God will not wait upon them always, to see what they will choose; but he will put an issue to the matter by his unalterable sentence. Therefore it becomes all, if they are afraid to have their lot assigned them in hell, to come soon to a determination.

8. Delay in this case is unreasonable, because those who delay know not how soon the opportunity of choosing for themselves will be past. This opportunity will last no longer than life; when once life is past, they will no more have the offer made them; the sentence will be past; the matter will be issued.

Those who delay their choice in this world will be glad to choose afterwards; then they will not be at all at a loss which to choose; they will be able easily to determine. The judgments of sinners who are departed this life, are soon resolved whether there be any truth in religion or not; they can soon determine which is best and most eligible, a life of obedience and selfdenial, with heaven for a reward, or a life of irreligion and sin, with hell for a punishment. Now they no longer halt between two opinions; but it is too late, their opportunity is past; they are ready too late. They would give all the world for another opportunity to choose; they would then soon come to a determination. But it will not be granted them.

APPLICATION.

1. Let this put every one upon examining himself, whether or no he have ever yet come to a full determination in the affair of religion.

First. Inquire whether or no you have ever yet come to a full determination with respect to the truth of the things of religion. Have you ever been fully convinced? Is it a question which has been answered and determined with you, whether there be a future state; or does it yet remain a question with you unresolved? Are you not yet to seek whether there be any future state, and whether or no the story about Jesus Christ be any more than a fable? Here I desire you to note two things.

1. If the main reason why you assent to the truth of religion be that others believe so, and you have been so instructed from your childhood; you are of those with whom the truth of religion yet remains undetermined. Tradition and education will never fix and settle the mind in a satisfactory and effectual belief of the truth of religion. Though men, taking religion upon trust, may seem to give a full assent to the truth of religion, and not to call it in question; yet such a faith will not stand a shock; a temptation easily overthrows it: The reason of man, in time of trial, will not rest on so poor evidence as that.

There are multitudes who seem to grant the truth of religion, with whom the main foundation of their faith is the tradition of their fathers, or the profession of their neighbors; and it is to be feared, it is so with many who count themselves good Christians. But as to all such persons as never have seen any other evidence to satisfy them, either of the truth or falsehood of religion, they are they that halt between two opinions. The same may be said of those who are unstable in

their disposition with regard to Christ or the things which he taught.

2. If you are fully come to a determination concerning the things of religion, that they are true, they will be of weight with you above all things in the world. If you be really convinced that these things are true, that they are no fable, but reality, it is impossible but that you must be influenced by them above all things in the world; for these things are so great, and so infinitely exceed all temporal things, that it cannot be otherwise. He that really is convinced that there is a heaven and hell, and an eternal judgment; that the soul, as soon as parted from the body, appears before the judgment seat of God; and that the happiness and misery of a future state is as great as the scripture represents it; or that God is as holy, just and jealous, as he hath declared concerning himself in his word; I say, he that is really convinced and hath settled it with himself that these things are certainly true; will regard them and be influenced by them above all things in the world. He will be more concerned by far how he shall escape eternal damnation, and have the favor of God and eternal life, than how he shall get the world, gratify the flesh, please his neighbors, get honor, or obtain any temporal advantage whatsoever. His main inquiry will not be, what shall I eat, and what shall I drink, &c. but he will seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

Examine yourselves therefore by this: Are not your hearts chiefly set upon the world, and the things of it? Is it not more your concern, care and endeavor to further your outward interest, than to secure an interest in heaven? And is not this the very reason that you have never seen the reality of eternal things?

Secondly. Inquire whether you have ever yet come to a determination about religion with respect to the practice of it; whether you have chosen heaven with the way to it, viz. the way of obedience and selfdenial, before this world and the ways of sin; whether you have determined upon it as most

eligible, to devote yourselves to the service of God. Here I shall mention three or four things which are signs that men halt between two opinions in this matter.

1. To put off duty till hereafter. When persons love to keep their duty at a distance, engage not in it for the present, but choose to keep at a little distance from it; when they think of engaging in religion in better earnest in a little time, when they shall so and so be under better conveniences for it, but do it not now, do not make haste without delay; when they are very good intenders, concerning what they will do to-morrow, but very poor performers today; when they say, as Felix, "Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee;" when these things are so, it is a sign that they halt between two opinions, and have never as yet come to a full determination with respect to the practice of religion. Those that have once fully determined that religion is necessary and eligible, will not desire to put it off, but will make it their present and immediate business.

2. It is a sign of the same thing when persons are strict and conscientious in some things, but not in all, not universal in their obedience; do some duties, but live in the omission of others; avoid some sins, but allow themselves in others; are conscientious with respect to the duties of worship, public and private, but not in their behavior to their neighbors; are not just in their dealings, nor conscientious in paying their debts; nor do to others as they would that they should do to them; but have crooked, perverse ways in their dealings among mankind.

The same may be said when they are just in their dealings and trade with men, but are not conscientious in other things; indulge sensual appetites, drink to excess, or allow themselves in wanton practices: Or are honest and temperate, but licentious in using their tongues, backbiting and reproaching their fellow men, 2 Tim. iii. 6, 7.

3. It is a sign that you halt between two opinions, if you sometimes are wont to be considerably engaged in religion, but at other times neglect it; sometimes forming a resolution to be

in good earnest, then dropping it again; sometimes seeming to be really engaged in seeking salvation, and very earnest in religious duties; at other times wholly taken up about the things of the world, while religion is neglected, and religious duties are omitted.

These things show that you are yet unsettled, have never yet come to a full determination concerning religion, but are halting between two opinions, and therefore are thus unstable in all your ways, and proceed thus by fits and starts in religion, James i. 6, 7, 8. "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A doubleminded man is unstable in all his ways." If your determination were fixed in religion, you would be more steady in your practice.

4. It is a sign that you are halting between two opinions, if it be your manner to balk your duty whenever any notable difficulty comes in the way, considerably cross to your interest, or very inconsistent with your ease or convenience, or your temporal honor. Whatever zeal you may seem to have, whatever concern about the things of religion, and however strict you be in ordinary, you have never, if this be your manner, come to a full determination; have never fully made choice of religion and the benefits of it for your only portion; and at best have got no further than king Agrippa, who was almost persuaded to be a Christian, Acts xxvi. 28. You are in the state of the stony ground hearers, you have no root in yourselves, and like a tree without root, are easily blown down by every wind.

II. I shall conclude with an earnest exhortation to all, no longer to halt between two opinions, but immediately to come to a determination whether to be Christians or not. Let me insist upon it, that you now make a choice, whether you will have heaven, with a life of universal and persevering obedience for your portion; or hell, with a life spent in the pursuit of this world. Consider those things which have been said,

shewing the unreasonableness of continuing in such irresolution about an affair of infinite importance to you, and as to which you have so short an opportunity to make your choice. Consider two things in addition to what hath been already said.

1. Those who live under the gospel, and thus continue undetermined about religion, are more abominable to God than the heathen. God had rather that men should either be Christians or downright heathens. He hates those persons who continue from year to year, under the calls, and warnings, and instructions, and intreaties of God's word; who yet can be brought to nothing; who will come to no determination at all; will neither be Christians nor heathens. These are they who are spoken of in Rev. iii. 15, 16. "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot: So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my month." Ezek. xx. 39. "As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God, Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me; but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols." These are they spoken of in 2 Tim. iii. 7. Ever learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth."

2. If you still refuse to come to a determination whether to be Christians or not, how just will it be, if God shall give you no further opportunity! If you refuse to make any choice at all; and after all that hath been done to bring you to it, in setting life and death, so often before you, in calling and warning you, if you will not come to a determination, how just will it be, if God shall wait no longer upon you, if he shall, by his unalterable sentence, determine the case himself; if he shall fix your state with the unbelievers, and teach you the truth and eligibleness of religion, by sad and fatal experience, when it will be too late for you to choose your portion, and the offer will be no more made you!

SERMON XII.*

Unbelievers contemn the Glory and Excellency of Christ.

ACTS iv. 11.

THIS IS THE STONE WHICH WAS SET AT NOUGHT OF YOU BUILDERS.

IN the foregoing chapters we have an account of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the apostles at Pentecost, and of the extraordinary effects of it, in their speaking boldly in the name of Jesus, and speaking many strange languages, and so being made the instruments of the sudden conversion of vast multitudes. And in the chapter immediately preceding there is an account how Peter and John miraculously healed a man who had been a cripple from his birth; which, together with the word which they spake to the people that flocked together on the occasion, was the means of a new accession to the church; so that the number of them that heard the word and believed, as we are told in the fourth verse of this chapter, was about five thousand.

This sudden and extraordinary progress of the gospel greatly alarmed the priests and scribes, and other chief men among the Jews; so that they laid hands on Peter and John, and put them in hold, and the next day brought them forth to

* Dated, May 1736.

appear before them, and called them to an account for what they had done. They asked them particularly by what power, or by what name they had wrought the miracle on the impotent man. Upon which Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, makes answer, "Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel....Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought by you builders, which is become the head of the corner." In the verse of the text the apostle mentions to them as now fulfilled, that in the 118th Psalm verse 22. "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner." This text, in that psalm, the apostle applies to them:

1. By telling them, *This is the stone*, i. e. this person of whom he had spoken in the foregoing verse, viz. Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, and whom God had raised from the dead.

2. By telling them, that they were the builders spoken of. They, before whom the apostle then was, and to whom he was speaking, were rulers and elders and scribes of the people, the high priest and other priests. They, as they were set to be rulers and teachers among God's people, by their office, were called to be builders of the church of God.

3. By telling them, that they had set this stone at nought. They had so done by refusing to accept of him. Christ came to his own, and his own received him not; and not only so, but they had openly manifested the greatest contempt of him. They had mocked him, scourged and spit upon him, and in derision crowned him with a crown of thorns, and arrayed him in a mock robe, and then had put him to a most ignominious death.

4. By telling them, that notwithstanding this, he was become the head of the corner. In spite of all that they could do, he had obtained the chief place in the building. God had made him the main foundation of it, by raising him from the dead, and so putting great honor upon him, and by pouring

out his Spirit, and enduing his disciples with extraordinary gifts, and by suddenly converting so many thousands to be the followers of Christ. They put him to death that he might have no followers, concluding that that would utterly put an end to his interest in Judea. But they were greatly disappointed; For the gospel had incomparably greater success after Christ's death than before. God had accomplished that very thing which they endeavored to prevent by Christ's crucifixion, viz. Christ's being believed in and submitted to, as the great Prophet of God and Prince of his people.

DOCTRINE.

Unbelievers set nothing by all the glory and excellency in Christ.

I. They set nothing by the excellency of his person. Christ is a great and glorious person, a person of infinite worthiness, on which account he is infinitely esteemed and loved of the Father, and is continually adored by the angels. But unbelievers have no esteem at all of him on that account. They have no value at all of him on account of his being the Son of God. He is not set the higher in their esteem on the account of his standing in so near and honorable a relation to God the Father. He is not valued at all the more for his being a divine person, or one that is God. By his having the divine nature, he is infinitely exalted above all created beings. But he is not at all exalted by it in their esteem. They set nothing by his infinite Majesty. His glorious brightness and greatness excite not any true respect or reverence in them.

Christ is the holy one of God; He is so holy that the heavens are not pure in his sight. He is possessed of all that holiness which is the infinite beauty and loveliness of the divine nature. But an unbeliever sets nothing by the holiness of Christ. Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God, as he is called, 1 Cor. i. 24. But an unbeliever sets nothing by his power and wisdom. The Lord Jesus Christ is full of

grace and mercy; the mercy and love of God appear no where else so brightly and gloriously as they do in the face of Jesus Christ. But an unbeliever sets no value at all upon the infinite grace of Christ.

Neither do unbelievers set any thing by those excellent virtues which appeared in Christ's human nature when he was upon earth. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; he was meek and lowly of heart; he was patient under afflictions and injuries; when he was reviled, he reviled not again. But unbelievers set nothing by these things in Jesus Christ. They very often hear how excellent and glorious a person Christ is; they are told of his holiness, and grace, and condescension, and meekness, and have the excellencies of Christ plainly set forth to them; yet they set all at nought.

II. They set nothing by his excellency in his work and office. They are told how glorious and complete a Mediator he is, how sufficient to answer all our necessities, and to save sinners to the uttermost; but they make light of it all; yea they make nothing of it. They hear of the wonderful wisdom of God in contriving such a way of salvation by Christ, they have the manifold wisdom of God set forth to them; but they set nothing by this wisdom, nor do they make any account of the excellency of this way of salvation.

The unbeliever hears what a wonderful thing it was, that he who was in the form of God, and esteemed it no robbery to be equal with God, should take upon him the human nature, and come and live in this world in a mean and low condition; but he makes nothing of this. He hears much of the dying love of Christ to sinners, how wonderful it was that so glorious a person, who is infinitely above the angels, should so set his love on such worms of the dust, so much below him, on such sinful creatures, who were his enemies, as to come and be made a curse for them, and die a cruel and ignominious death in their stead; but he sets nothing by all this. This dying love of Christ is a thing of no account with him; those great

things that Christ hath done and suffered are with him light matters, things of no weight at all.

Unbelievers not only set little by the glory and excellency of Christ, but they set nothing by these things. Notwithstanding all the shows and pretences which many natural men make of respect to Christ, by speaking honorably of Christ in their prayers, and in their common conversation, and by coming to sacraments, and attending other ordinances of Christ; yet indeed they do not set so much by all the glory and excellency of Christ, either the glory of his person, or the glory of his work as a Saviour, as they do by the smallest earthly enjoyment.

I proceed now to mention some *evidences of* the truth of this doctrine.

1. They never give Christ any honor on the account of this his glory and excellency. They may, and often do pay Christ an external and seeming respect; but they do not honor Christ in their hearts. They have no exalting thoughts of Christ, no inward respect or reverence towards him; they have indeed no honorable, respectful thoughts of Christ. All their outward worship is only feigned; none of it arises from any real honor or respect in their hearts towards Christ. It is either only for fashion's sake, and in compliance with custom, or else it is forced, and is what they are driven to by fear, as we read, Psalm lxvi. 3. "Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee." In the original it is, *shall thine enemies lie unto thee*, i. e. yield a feigned obedience. Through the greatness of Christ's power, and for fear of his wrath, his enemies, who have no respect or honor for him in their hearts, will lie to him, and make a show of respect when they have none.

An unbeliever is not sensible that Christ is worthy of any glory, and therefore does not at all seek the glory of Christ in any thing that he does; he does nothing that he does in religion, out of respect to Christ's glory, but wholly for other

ends; which shows that he sees not Christ to be worthy of any glory. Christ is set last and lowest in the heart of an unbeliever. He has high thoughts of other things; he has high thoughts of creature objects and earthly enjoyments, but mean and low thoughts of Christ. He has more honorable thoughts of that which is but mere dirt and dung, than he has of Jesus Christ.

The unbeliever shows the mean and contemptible thoughts that he has of Christ, in refusing to accept of him, and in shutting the door of his heart against him. Christ stands at the door and knocks, and sometimes stands many years knocking at the door of his heart, and he refuses to open to him. Now it certainly shows that men have a very mean thought of a person, when they shut him out of their doors. Unbelievers show the mean and dishonorable thoughts they have of Christ, in that they dare not trust him. They believe not what he says to be true; they will not trust the word of Christ, so far as the word of one of their honest neighbors, or of a servant whom they have found to be faithful. It also appears that they have no real honor for Christ in their hearts, in that they refuse to obey his commands. They do nothing that they do from a spirit of obedience to him; and that external obedience which they render, is but a forced, feigned obedience, and not from any respect to Christ's authority or worthiness to be obeyed.

2. They have no love to him on the account of his glory and excellency. If they did set any thing by all the glory and excellency of Christ, or if they saw any excellency or glory in in Christ, they would have some measure of love to Christ. But the truth is, they see no form or comeliness in Christ, and hence they have no love at all to Christ: An unbeliever never exercises one act of true love to Christ. All that he is told of the glory of Christ, of his divine perfections, of his holiness, his meekness, and grace, has no influence at all to draw forth any love. The display of these things doth no more draw forth love out of the heart of an unbeliever, than it draws forth love from the stones and rocks.

A natural man hath no love of benevolence towards Christ. Notwithstanding all that is declared to him of the excellency of Christ, he has no good will towards Christ. He rejoices not in his glory and happiness; he would not care what became of Christ, if he could but escape hell. If Christ should be dethroned, or made miserable, or should cease to be, he has not so much good will to Christ, as would make him concerned about it. And if the kingdom and interest of Christ in the world should go to ruin, it would be no wise grievous to the unbeliever, provided his own interest could be secure.

So also an unbeliever has no love of complacency in Jesus Christ for his excellency. He takes no delight in the view or consideration of any of that glory and excellency of Christ of which he is told. He is told that it is exceedingly beautiful and glorious; but he sees nothing entertaining *in* it; he takes no pleasure in the view of any thing that he can see in Christ: The thoughts of the glory of Christ are nowise entertaining to him: He has no delight in the thoughts of it, or in any contemplations upon it. He takes delight in thinking of these and those earthly objects; but when he comes to turn his mind upon Jesus Christ, if ever he so does, this is to him a dry and barren subject; he finds nothing there to feed and delight his soul; no beauty or loveliness to please or gratify him.

3. Unbelievers have no desires after the enjoyment of Christ. If they did set any thing by the glory and excellency of Christ, they would have some desires after him on account of that excellency; especially when he is offered to them, and is from time to time set forth as the proper object of their choice and desires. That which men prize, they are wont to desire, especially if it be represented to them as attainable, and as fit and suitable for them. But unbelievers have no desires after the enjoyment of Christ. They desire to be delivered from hell, but they desire not to enjoy Christ.

They have no idea of any happiness to be had in the enjoyment of Christ: They cannot conceive what happiness

there can be in beholding Christ and being with him, in seeing his holiness, and contemplating his wonderful grace and divine glory. They have no relish for any such thing, nor appetite after it.

4. They show that they set nothing by the glory and excellency of Christ, in that they seek not at all a conformity to that glory and excellency. A natural man may seek to be holy, but it is not for holiness' sake, it is only that he may escape wrath. He has no desires after holiness, nor is it indeed holiness that he seeks, because he is all the while an enemy to holiness. A natural man has no desires to have his soul conformed to the glorious beauty and excellency of Christ, nor to have his image upon him.

If he in any degree prized or delighted in the excellencies of Christ, he would necessarily desire to be like him so far as he could. This we see in ourselves and in all men: When we see any qualifications in others that are pleasing to us, and that we set by, it is natural for us to endeavor to imitate them, and to seek to be in those things conformed to those persons. Hence men are apt to learn of those of whom they have a great esteem; they naturally fall into an imitation of their ways and manner of behavior. But natural men feel within themselves no disposition or inclination to learn of Christ, or to imitate him. Their tempers and dispositions remain quite contrary to Christ's, neither do they grow at all better or more conformed to Christ, but wax worse and worse. 2 Tim. iii. 13. "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse."

APPLICATION.

I. This doctrine may teach us the heinousness of the sin of unbelief, as this sin sets all the glory and excellency of Christ at nought. It often appears strange to natural men, that unbelief should be spoken of as such a heinous and crying sin. They cannot see such evil in it. There are other sins which often trouble natural men's consciences, when this sin

of unbelief troubles them not at all, though it be that which brings far greater guilt upon them, than those sins about which they are more troubled.

This that has been now said may show why unbelief is spoken of as such a heinous sin, as it is, John iii. 18. and chap. xvi. 9. and 1 John v. 10. For thereby all the glory and excellency of Christ is set at nought, though it be so great, though it be infinite, though it be the glory of the godhead itself, and though it has been so gloriously manifested in what Christ has done and suffered. Natural men in their unbelief cast contempt on all this glory, and tread it under foot, as being nothing worth. Their unbelief treats the excellency of Christ as being of less value than the meanest earthly enjoyments.

II. This doctrine may convict natural men in *four particulars.*

1. Hereby you may be convinced of the greatness of your guilt. Consider how great and excellent that person is, whom you thus set at nought. Contempt of any person is heinous in proportion to the worthiness and dignity of the person contemned. Though we are but men, and worms of the dust, and very vile, sinful creatures; yet we take it grievously when we are despised. Consider how you yourselves are ready to resent it, when any of your neighbors seem to slight you, and set light by what you say and do, and to make no account of it, but to treat you as if you were good for nothing, or not worth minding. Do you take this well of your neighbors and equals, when you observe any thing of this nature? Are you not ready to look upon it with resentment, to think very ill of it, and to judge that you have great cause to be offended?

But if it be such a crime to despise you and set you at nought, what is it to set at nought the eternal, infinitely glorious Son of God, in comparison with whom you, and all nations, are nothing and less than nothing, and vanity? You dislike it much to be contemned by your equals; but you would take it yet more grievously to be despised by your inferiors, by those whom on every account you much excel,....What a crime is

it then for a vile, sinful worm, to set at nought him who is the brightness of the glory of the King of kings!

It would be a crime inexpressibly heinous, to set *little* by the glory and excellency of such a person; but it is more so, to set *nothing at all* by it, as you do. You have no value at all for it, as has been shown. And this is the more aggravated, as Christ is a person whom you so much need, and as he came into the world out of infinite grace to sinners, to lay down his life to deliver them from hell, and purchase for them eternal glory. How much has Christ done and suffered, that you might have opportunity to be saved! Yet you set nothing by it all; you set nothing by the blood of Christ, even by that blood that was shed for such poor sinners as you are, and that is offered to you for your salvation. But you trample under foot the blood of the Son of God. If Christ had come into the world only *to teach* us, it would have been a heinous thing to trample under foot his word and instructions. But when he came to die for us, how much more heinous is it to trample under foot his blood!

Men take it hardly to have any of their qualifications or actions despised, which they esteem commendable. But especially do they highly resent it when others slight their kindness. And above all when they have put themselves out of their way, and have denied themselves, and suffered considerably to do others a kindness; then to have their kindness despised and set at nought, is what men would above all things resent. How heinous then is it, and how exceedingly provoking to God must it be, thus to set at nought so great kindness and love of Christ, when, from love to sinners, he suffered so much?

Consider how highly the angels, who are so much above you, do set by the glory and excellency of Christ, by which you set nothing. They admire and adore the glory of Christ, and cease not day nor night to praise the same in the most exalted strains. Rev. v. 11. 12. "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: And the number of them was ten

thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." The saints admire the excellency of Christ, and the glorious angels admire it, and every creature in heaven and earth, but only you unbelieving children of men.

Consider not only how much the angels set by the glory of Christ, but how much God himself sets by it; for he is the darling of Heaven, he was eternally God's delight; and because of his glory God hath thought him worthy to be appointed the heir of all things, and hath seen fit to ordain that all men *should honor the Son even as they honor the Father*.....Is he thus worthy of the infinite esteem and love of God himself? And is he worthy of no esteem from you?

2. Hereby you may be convinced of your danger. You must needs think that such guilt will bring great wrath: Doubtless God is dreadfully provoked by your thus despising Jesus Christ. Dreadful destruction is denounced in Scripture against those that despise only the disciples of Christ, Matth. xviii. 6. What destruction then will come on them that despise all the glorious excellency of Christ himself!

Consider that you not only have no value for all the glory and excellency of Christ; but you are enemies to him on that very account. The very ground of that enmity and opposition which there is between your hearts and Jesus Christ, is the glorious perfections and excellencies that there are in Jesus Christ. By being such an holy and excellent Saviour, he is contray to your lusts and corruptions: If there were a Saviour offered to you that was agreeable to your corrupt nature, such a Saviour you would fall in with the offer of; such a Saviour you would accept. But, Christ being a Saviour of such purity, holiness, and divine perfection, this is the cause why you have no inclination to him, but are offended in him.

Instead of being a precious stone in your eyes, he is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to you. That he is a Saviour who hath manifested such divine perfections in what

he hath done and suffered, is one principal reason why you set nothing by him. Consider how provoking this must needs be to God the Father, who has given his only begotten Son for your salvation; and what wrath it merits from the Son whom you thus treat. And consider how you will hereafter bear this wrath.

Consider that however Christ be set at nought by you, yet he shall be the head of the corner, and that even with respect to you. Though you set him low, yet he shall be exalted with respect to you. It is but a vain thing for you to make light of Christ and treat him with contempt. How much soever you contemn him, you cannot break his bands asunder, nor cast his cords from you. You will still be in his hands. While you despise Christ, God will despise you, and the Lord will have you in derision. God will set his king on his holy hill of Zion in spite of all his enemies; Psalm ii. 1.....6. Though you say we will not have this man to reign over us, yet Christ will rule over you; Psalm cx. 2. "Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies." If you will not submit to the sceptre of his grace, you shall be subject to the rod of his wrath, and he will rule you with a rod of iron; Psalm ii. 9, 10, 11, 12.

3. You may hence be led to see how worthless many of those things in yourselves are, that you have been ready to make much of. Particularly if it be so that you set nothing by all the glory of Christ, then what are those desires that you have after Christ good for? And that willingness that you think you find to come to Christ?....Sinners are often wont to excuse themselves in their unbelief with this, that they see not but that they are willing to come to Christ, and would gladly come to him if they could, and have great desires to come to him. And they make much of such a willingness and such desires, as though God were unjust to punish them for not coming to Christ, when they would gladly come to Christ if they could. But this doctrine shows that your willingness and desires to come to Christ are not worthy to be mentioned as any excuse: For they are not from any respect

to Christ, but are merely forced: You at the same time set Christ at nought; or set nothing by all his excellency and glory.

So you may hence learn the worthlessness of all your pains and endeavors after Christ. When sinners have taken a great deal of pains to get an interest in Christ, they are wont to make a righteousness of it; little considering that at the very time they are taking so much pains to get an interest in Christ, they set nothing at all by Christ for any glory or excellency that there is in him; but set him wholly at nought, and seek him out of respect to their own interest.

4. Hence learn how justly God might for ever refuse to give you an interest in Christ. For why should God give you any part or interest in him whom you set at nought, all whose glory and excellency you value not in the least, but rather trample it under your feet, and prefer the dirt before it.

Why should God ever give you any interest in him whom you so despise? Seeing you despise him, how justly might you be obliged to go without any interest in him! How justly might you be refused any part in that precious stone, whose preciousness you make no account of, and esteem no more than that of the stones of the street!....Is God obliged to cast such a pearl before swine who will trample it under their feet? Is God obliged to make you possessors of his infinitely glorious and dear Son, when at the same time you count him not worth the having, for the sake of any worth or excellency that there is in him; but merely because you cannot escape hell without him?

SERMON XIII.*

The Folly of Looking Back in fleeing out of Sodom.

LUKE xvii. 32.

REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE.

CHRIST is here foretelling his coming in his kingdom in answer to the question which the Pharisees asked him, viz. *When the kingdom of God should come.* And in what he says of his coming, he evidently has respect to two things, his coming at the destruction of Jerusalem, and his coming to the general judgment at the end of the world. He compares his coming at those times to the coming of God in two remarkable judgments that were past; first, to that in the time of the flood; "and as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man." Next, he compares it to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; "likewise also, as it was in the days of Lot, even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed."

Then he immediately proceeds to direct his people how they should behave themselves at the appearance of the signal of the approach of that day, referring especially to the destruction of Jerusalem. "In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: And he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back." In which words Christ shows that they should make the utmost haste to flee and get out of the

* Dated May 1738.

city to the mountains, as he commands. Matth. xxiv. 15. &c. "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place, then let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains; let him which is in the housetop not come down to take any thing out of the house, neither let him which is in the field turn back to take his clothes."

Jerusalem was like Sodom, in that it was devoted to destruction, by special divine wrath, as that was; and indeed to a more terrible destruction than Sodom was. Therefore the like direction is given concerning fleeing out of it with the utmost haste, without looking behind, as the angel gave to Lot, when he bid him flee out of Sodom. Gen. xix. 17. "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain."....And in the text Christ enforces his counsel by the instance of Lot's wife. He bids them remember her, and take warning by her, who looked back as she was fleeing out of Sodom, and became a pillar of salt.

If it be inquired why Christ gave this direction to his people to flee out of Jerusalem, in such exceeding haste, at the first notice of the signal of her approaching destruction; I answer, it seems to be, because fleeing out of Jerusalem was a type of fleeing out of a state of sin. Escaping out of that unbelieving city typified an escape out of a state of unbelief. Therefore they were directed to flee without staying to take any thing out of their houses, to signify with what haste and greatness of concern we should flee out of a natural condition, that no respect to any worldly enjoyment should prevent or delay us one moment, and that we should flee to Jesus Christ, the refuge of souls, our strong rock, and the mount of our defence, so as in fleeing to him, to leave and forsake heartily all earthly things.

This seems to be the chief reason also why Lot was directed to make such haste, and not to look behind; because his fleeing out of Sodom was designed on purpose to be a type of our fleeing from that state of sin and misery in which we naturally are.

DOCTRINE.

We ought not to look back when we are fleeing out of Sodom.....The following reasons may be sufficient to support this doctrine:

1. That Sodom is a city full of filthiness and abominations. It is a filthy and abominable city; it is full of those impurities that are worthy to be had in the utmost abhorrence and detestation by all. The inhabitants of it are a polluted company, they are all under the power and dominion of hateful lusts. All their faculties and affections are polluted with those vile dispositions that are unworthy of the human nature, that greatly debase it, that are exceedingly hateful to God and dreadfully incense his anger. Every kind of spiritual abomination abounds in it: In Sodom there is all filthiness that can be thought of. There is nothing so hateful and abominable but that there it is to be found, and there it abounds.

Sodom is a city full of devils and all unclean spirits; there they have their rendezvous, and there they have their dominion. There they and those that are like unto them, do sport and wallow themselves in filthiness, as it is said of mystical Babylon, Rev. xviii. 2. Babylon, is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird: Who would be of such a society? Who would not flee from such a city with the utmost haste, and never look back upon it, and never have the least inclination of returning, or having any thing to do there any more?

Some in Sodom may seem to cary a fair face, and make a fair outward show; but if we could look into their hearts, they are every one altogether filthy and abominable. We ought to flee from such a city, with the utmost abhorrence of the place and society, with no desires to dwell longer there, and never to discover the least inclination to return to it; but

should be desirous to get to the greatest possible distance from it, that we might in no wise be partakers in her abominations.

2. We ought not to look back when fleeing out of Sodom, because Sodom is a city appointed to destruction. The cry of the city hath reached up to heaven. The earth cannot bear such a burden as her inhabitants are; she will therefore disburden herself of them, and spue them out. God will not suffer such a city to stand; he will consume it. God is an holy God, and his nature is infinitely opposite to all such uncleanness as Sodom is full of; he will therefore be a consuming fire to it. The holiness of God will not suffer it to stand, and the Majesty and justice of God require that the inhabitants of that city, who thus offend and provoke him, be destroyed. And God will surely destroy them; it is the immutable and irreversible decree of God. He hath said it, and he will do it. The decree is gone forth, and so sure as there is a God, and he is Almighty, and able to fulfil his decrees and threatenings, so surely will he destroy Sodom. Gen. xix. 12, 13. "Whatsoever thou hast in this city, bring them out of this place; for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord, and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it." And verse 14. "Up, get ye out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city."

This city is an accursed city; it is destined to ruin. Therefore, as we would not be partakers of her curse, and would not be destroyed, we should flee out of it, and not look behind us, Rev. xviii. 4. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

3. We ought not to look back when fleeing out of Sodom, because the destruction to which it is appointed is exceedingly dreadful; it is appointed to utter destruction, to be wholly and entirely consumed. It is appointed to suffer the wrath of the great God, which is to be poured down from God upon it, like a dreadful storm of fire and brimstone. This city is to be filled full of the wrath of God. Every one that remains in it shall have the fire of God's wrath come down on his head

and into his soul: He shall be full of fire, and full of the wrath of the Almighty. He shall be encompassed with fire without and full of fire within: His head, his heart, his bowels, and all his limbs shall be full of fire, and not a drop of water to cool him.

Nor shall he have any place to flee to for relief. Go where he will, there is the fire of God's wrath: His destruction and torment will be inevitable. He shall be destroyed without any pity. He shall cry aloud, but there shall be none to help, there shall be none to regard his lamentations, or to afford relief. The decree is gone forth, and the days come when Sodom shall burn as an oven, and all the inhabitants thereof shall be as stubble. As it was in the literal Sodom, the whole city was full of fire; in their houses there was no safety, for they were all on fire; and if they fled out into the streets, they also were full of fire. Fire, continually came down out of heaven every where. That was a dismal time. What a cry was there then in that city, in every part of it! But there was none to help; they had no where to go, where they could hide their heads from fire: They had none to pity or relieve them. If they fled to their friends, they could not help them.

Now, with what haste should we flee from a city appointed to such a destruction! And how should we flee without looking behind us! How should it be our whole intent, and what we with all our minds and might are engaged about, to get at the greatest distance from a city in such circumstances! How far should we be from thinking at all of returning to a city which has such wrath hanging over it!

4. The destruction to which Sodom is appointed is an universal destruction. None that stay in it shall escape: None will have the good fortune to be in any by corner, where the fire will not search them out. All sorts, old and young, great and small, shall be destroyed. There shall be no exception of any age, or any sex, or any condition, but all shall perish together. Gen. xix. 24, 25. "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the

Lord out of heaven, and he overthrew those cities and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground." We therefore must not longer delay or look behind us; for there is no place of safety in Sodom, nor in all the plain on which Sodom is built. The mountain of safety is before us, and not behind us.

3. The destruction to which Sodom is appointed *is* an everlasting destruction. This is said of the literal Sodom, that it suffered the vengeance of eternal fire, Jude vii. "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, in like manner giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." That destruction that Sodom and Gomorrah suffered was an eternal destruction: Those cities were destroyed, and have never been built since, and are not capable of being rebuilt; for the land on which they stood at the time of their destruction sunk, and has been ever since covered with the lake of Sodom or the dead sea, or as it is called in scripture, *the salt sea*. This seems to have been thus ordered on purpose to be a type of the eternal destruction of ungodly men. So that fire by which they were destroyed is called eternal fire, because it was so typically, it was a type of the eternal destruction of ungodly men; which may be in part what is intended, when it is said in that text in Jude, that they were set forth for an example, or for a type or representation of the eternal fire in which all the ungodly are to be consumed.

Sodom has in all ages since been covered with a lake which was first brought on it by fire and brimstone, to be a type of the lake of fire and brimstone in which ungodly men shall have their part forever and ever, as we read Rev. xx. 15, and elsewhere.

We ought not therefore to look back when fleeing out of Sodom, seeing that the destruction to which it is appointed is an eternal destruction; for this renders the destruction infinitely dreadful.

6. Sodom is a city appointed to swift and sudden destruction. The destruction is not only certain and inevitable, and infinitely dreadful, but it will come speedily. "Their judgment lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not;" 2 Pet. ii. 3. And so Deut. xxxii. 35. "The day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste." The storm of wrath, the black clouds of divine vengeance even now every moment hang over them, just ready to break forth and come down in a dreadful manner upon them. God hath already whet his sword, and bent his bow, and made ready his arrow on the string, Psalm vii. 12. Therefore we should make haste, and not look behind us. For if we linger and stop to look back, and flee not for our lives, there is great danger that we shall be involved in the common ruin.

The destruction of Sodom is not only swift, but will come suddenly and unexpectedly. It seems to have been a fair morning in Sodom on the morning that it was destroyed. There is notice taken of the time when the sun rose that morning, Gen. xix. 23. It seems that there were no clouds to be seen, no appearance of any storm at all, much less a storm of fire and brimstone. The inhabitants of Sodom expected no such thing; even when Lot told his sons in law of it, they would not believe it; Gen. xix. 14. They were making merry; their hearts were at ease, they thought nothing of such a calamity at hand. But it came at once, as travail upon a woman with child, and there was no escape; as it is observed in the context, v. 28, 29. "They did eat, they drank; they bought, they sold; they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and detroyed them all."

So it is with wicked men; Psalm lxxiii. 19. "How are they brought into desolation in a moment; they are utterly consumed with terrors." If therefore we linger and look back, we may be suddenly overtaken and seized with destruction.

7. There is nothing in Sodom that is worth looking back upon. All the enjoyments of Sodom will soon perish in the common destruction, all will be burnt up. And surely it is not worth the while to look back on things that are perishing and consuming in the flames, as it is with all the enjoyments of sin; they are all appointed to the fire. Therefore it is foolish for any who are fleeing out of Sodom to hanker any more after them; for when they are burnt up, what good can they do? And is it worth the while for us to return back for the sake of a moment's enjoyment of them, before they are burnt, and so expose ourselves to be burnt up with them?

Lot's wife looked back, because she remembered the pleasant things that she left in Sodom. She hated to leave them; she hankered after them; she could not but look back with a wishful eye upon the city, where she had *lived in* such ease and pleasure. Sodom was a place of great outward plenty; they ate the fat, and drank the sweet. The soil where Sodom was built was exceedingly fruitful; it is said to be as *the garden of God*, Gen. xii 10. And *fulness of bread* was one of the sins of the place, Ezek. xvi. 49.

Here Lot and his wife lived plentifully; and it was a place where the inhabitants wallowed in carnal pleasures and delights. But however much it abounded in these things, what were they worth now, when the city was burning? Lot's wife was very foolish in lingering in her escape, for the sake of things which were all on fire. So the enjoyments, the profits, and pleasures of sin, have the wrath and curse of God on them: Brimstone is scattered on them: Hellfire is ready to kindle on them. It is not therefore worth while for any person to look back after such things.

8. We are warned by messengers sent to us from God to make haste in our flight from Sodom, and not to look behind us. God sends to us his ministers, the angels of the churches, on this grand errand, as he sent the angels to warn Lot and his wife to flee for their lives, and to say and do as we have account in Gen. xix. 15, 16. If we delay or look back, now that we have had such fair warning, we shall be exceedingly inexcusable and monstrously foolish.

APPLICATION.

The use that I would make of this doctrine is, to warn those who are in a natural condition to flee out of it, and by no means to look back. While you are out of Christ, you are in Sodom. The whole history of the destruction of Sodom, with all its circumstances, seems to be inserted in the scriptures for our warning, and is set forth for an example, as the Apostle Jude says. It, in a lively manner, typifies the case of natural men, the destruction of those that continue in a natural state and the manner of their escape who flee to Christ. The Psalmist, when speaking of the appointed punishment of ungodly men, seems evidently to refer to the destruction of Sodom, in Psalm xi. 6. "Upon the wicked God shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup."

Consider therefore what the state is that you are to get out of, you that are seeking an interest in Christ: You are to flee out of Sodom. Sodom is the place of your nativity, and the place where you have spent your lives hitherto. You are citizens of that city which is full of filthiness and abomination before God, that polluted and accursed city. You belong to that impure society. You not only live among them, but you are of them, you are some that have committed those abominations, and have so provoked God as you have heard. It is you that I have all this while been speaking of under this doctrine; you are the inhabitants of Sodom. Perhaps you may look on your circumstances as not very dreadful; but you dwell in Sodom! Though you may be reformed, and appear with a clean outside, and a smooth face to the world; yet as long as you are in a natural condition, you are impure inhabitants of Sodom.

The world of mankind is divided into two companies, or, as I may say, into two cities: There is the city of Zion, the

church of God, the holy and beloved city; and there is Sodom, that polluted and accursed city, which is appointed to destruction. You belong to the latter of these. How much soever you may look upon yourselves better than some others, yet you are of the same city; the same company with fornicators, and drunkards, and adulterers, and common swearers, and highwaymen, and pirates, and Sodomites. How much soever you may think yourselves distinguished, as long as you are out of Christ you belong to the very same society; you are of the company, you join with them, and are no better than they, any otherwise than as you have greater restraints. You are considered in the sight of God as fit to be ranked with them. You and they are altogether the objects of the loathing and abhorrence of God, and have the wrath of God abiding on you; you will go with them and be destroyed *with them*, if you do not escape from your present state. Yea, you are of the same society and the same company with the devils, for Sodom is not only the city of wicked men, but it is the hold of every foul spirit.

You belong to that city that is appointed to an awful, inevitable, universal, swift, and sudden destruction; a city that hath a storm of fire and wrath hanging over it. Many of you are convinced of the awful state you are in while in Sodom, and are making some attempts to escape from the wrath which hangs over it. Let such be warned by what hath been said, to escape for their lives, and not to look back. Look not back, unless you choose to have a share in the burning tempest that is coming down on that city. Look not back in remembrance of the enjoyments which you have had in Sodom, as hankering after the pleasant things which you have had there, after the ease, the security, and the pleasure which you have there enjoyed.

Remember Lot's wife; for she looked back, as being loath utterly and for ever to leave the ease, the pleasure and plenty which she enjoyed in Sodom, and as having a mind to return to them again: Remember what became of her.....Remember the children of Israel in the wilderness, who were desir-

ous of going back again into Egypt, because they remembered the leeks and onions, &c. of Egypt; Numb. xi. 5. "We remember the flesh which we did eat in Egypt freely, the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick." Remember what was the issue of their hankering. You must be willing for ever to leave all the ease, and pleasure, and profit of sin, to forsake all for salvation, as Lot forsook all, and left all he had, to escape out of Sodom. And further to enforce this warning, let me intreat all you who are in this state, to consider these several things which I shall now mention:

I. The destruction of which you are in danger is infinitely more dreadful than that destruction of the literal Sodom from which Lot fled. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in a storm of fire and brimstone, was but a shadow of the destruction of ungodly men in hell, and is no more to it than a shadow or a picture is to a reality, or than painted fire is to real fire. The misery of hell is set forth by various shadows and images in Scripture, as blackness of darkness, a never dying worm, a furnace of fire, a lake of fire and brimstone, the torments of the valley of the son of Hinnom, a storm of fire and brimstone. The reason why so many similitudes are made use of, is because none of them are sufficient. Any one does but partly and very imperfectly represent the truth, and therefore God makes use of many.

You have therefore much more need to make haste in your escape, and not to look behind you, than Lot and his wife had when they fled out of Sodom; for you are every day and every moment in danger of a thousand times more dreadful storm coming on your heads, than that which came on Sodom, when the Lord rained brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven upon them; so that it will be vastly more sottish in you to look back than it was in Lot's wife.

2. The destruction you are in danger of is not only greater than the temporal destruction of Sodom, but greater than the eternal destruction of the inhabitants of Sodom. For however well you may think you have behaved yourselves, you

who have continued impenitent under the glorious gospel, have sinned more, and provoked God far more, and have greater guilt upon you, than the inhabitants of Sodom; although you may seem to yourselves, and perhaps to others, to be very harmless creatures. Matth. x. 15. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

3. Multitudes, while they have been looking back, have been suddenly overtaken and seized by the storm of wrath. The wrath of God hath not delayed, while they have delayed; it has not waited at all for them to repent, to turn about and flee; but has presently seized them, and they have been past hope.....When Lot's wife looked back, she was immediately destroyed. God had exercised patience towards her before. When she lingered at the setting out, the angels pressed her, her husband and children, to make haste. Not only so, but when they yet delayed, they laid hold on her hands, and brought her forth, and set her without the city, the Lord being merciful to her. But now when, notwithstanding this mercy, and the warnings which had been given her, she looked back, God exercised no more patience towards her, but proceeded in wrath immediately to put her to death.

Now God has in like manner been merciful to you. You in time past have been lingering; you have been warned by the angel of your danger, and pressed to make haste and flee; yet you have delayed. And now at length God hath, as it were, laid hold on you, by the convictions of his Spirit, to draw you out of Sodom; therefore *remember Lot's wife*. If now after all, you should look back, when God hath been so merciful to you, you will have reason to fear, that God will suddenly destroy you, and wait no longer on you. Multitudes when they have been looking back and putting off to another opportunity, they have never had another opportunity; they have been suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy.

4. If you look back, and live long after it, there will be great danger that you will never get any further. The only way to seek salvation is to press forward, with all your might,

and still to look and press forward, never to stand still or slacken your pace.....When Lot's wife stopped in her flight, and stood still in order that she might look, her punishment was, that there she was to stand for ever; she never got any farther; she never got beyond that place; but there she stood as a pillar of salt, a durable pillar and monument of wrath, for her folly and wickedness.

So it very often is with backsliders, though they may live a considerable time after. When they look back, after they have been taking pains for their salvation, they loose all, they put themselves under vast disadvantages; by quenching the Spirit of God, and losing their convictions, they dreadfully harden their own hearts and stupify their souls, make way for discouragements, dreadfully strengthen and establish the interest of sin in their hearts, many ways give Satan great advantages to ruin them, and provoke God oftentimes utterly to leave them to hardness of heart. When they come to look back, their souls presently become dead and hard like Lot's wife's body: And if this be the case, though they live long after, they never get any further; it is worse for them than if they were immediately damned. When persons in fleeing out of Sodom look back, their last case is far worse than the first; Matth. xii. 43, 44, 45.....And experience confirms that none ordinarily are so hard to be brought to repentance as backsliders.

5. It may well stir you up to flee for your lives, and not to look behind you, when you consider how many have lately fled to the mountain, while you yet remain in Sodom. To what multitudes hath God given the wisdom to flee to Christ, the mountain of safety! They have fled to the little city Zoar, which God will spare and never destroy. How many have you seen of all sorts resorting out of Sodom thither, as believing the word of God by the angels, that God would surely destroy that place. They are in a safe condition; they are got out of the reach of the storm; the fire and brimstone can do them no hurt there.

But you yet remain in that cursed city among that accursed company. You are yet in Sodom, which God is about so terribly to destroy, where you are in danger every minute of having snares, fire, and brimstone, come down on your head.... Though so many have obtained, yet you have not obtained deliverance. Good has come, but you have seen none of it. Others are happy, but no one knows what will become of you: You have no part nor lot in that glorious salvation of souls, which has lately been among us....The consideration of this should stir you up effectually to escape, and in your escape to press forward, still to press forward, and to resolve to press forward for ever, let what will be in the way, to hearken to no temptation, and never to look back, or in any wise slacken or abate your endeavors as long as you live, but *if* possible to increase in them more and more.

6. Backsliding after such a time as *this**, *will* have a vastly greater tendency to seal a man's damnation than at another time. The greater means men have, the louder calls, and the greater advantages they are under, the more dangerous is backsliding, the more it has a tendency to enhance guilt, to provoke God, and to harden the heart.

We, in this land of light, have long enjoyed greater advantages than the most of the world. But the advantages which persons are under now for their salvation, are perhaps tenfold to what they have been at such times as we have ordinarily lived in; and backsliding will be proportionably the greater sin, and the more dangerous to the soul.....You have seen God's glory and his wonders amongst us, in a most marvellous manner of late. If therefore you look back after this, there will be great danger that God will swear in his wrath, that you shall never enter into his rest; as God sware concerning them that were for going back into Egypt, after they had seen the wonders which God wrought for Israel. Numb. xiv. 22, 23. "Because all those men that have seen my glory and my miracles that I did in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not

* The time of the revival of Religion at Northampton, A. D. 1735.

hearkened to my voice; surely they shall not see the land which I sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it."....The wonders that we have seen among us of late, have been of a more glorious nature than those that the children of Israel saw in Egypt and in the wilderness.

7. We know not but that great part of the wicked world are, at this day, in Sodom's circumstances, when Lot fled out of it, having some outward, temporal destruction hanging over it. It looks as if some great thing were coming; the state of things in the world seems to be ripe for some great revolution. The world has got to such a terrible degree of wickedness, that it is probable the cry of it has, by this time, reached up to heaven; and it is hardly probable that God will suffer things to go on, as they now do, much longer. It is likely that God will ere long appear in awful Majesty to vindicate his own cause; and then none will be safe that are out of Christ. Now therefore every one should flee for his life, and escape to the mountain, lest he be consumed.....We cannot certainly tell what God is about to do, but this we may know, that those who are out of Christ are in a most unsafe state.

8. To enforce this warning against looking back, let me beseech you to consider the exceeding proneness which there is in the heart to it. The heart of man is a backsliding heart. There is in the heart a great love and hankering desire after the ease, pleasure, and enjoyments of Sodom, as there was in Lot's wife, by which persons are continually liable to temptations to look back. The heart is so much towards Sodom, that it is a difficult thing to keep the eye from turning that way, and the feet from tending thither. When men under convictions are put upon fleeing, it is a mere force, it is because God lays hold on their hands, as he did on Lot's and his wife's, and drags them so far. But the tendency of the heart is to go back to Sodom again.

Persons are very prone to backsliding, also through discouragement. They are apt to be discouraged. The heart

is unsteady, soon tired, soon gives out, is apt to listen to discouraging temptations. A little difficulty and delay soon overcome its feeble resolutions. And discouragement tends to backsliding: It weakens persons' hands, lies as a dead weight on their hearts, and makes them drag heavily; and if it continue long, it very often issues in security and senselessness. Convictions are often shaken off that way; they begin first to go off with discouragement.

Backsliding is a disease that is exceeding secret in its way of working. It is a flattering distemper; it works like a consumption, wherein persons often flatter themselves that they are not worse, but something better, and in a hopeful way to recover, till a few days before they die. So backsliding commonly comes on gradually, and steals on men insensibly, and they still flatter themselves that they are not backslidden. They plead that they are seeking yet, and they hope they have not lost their convictions. And by the time they find it out, and cannot pretend so any longer, they are commonly so far gone, that they care not much if they have lost their convictions. And when it is come to that, it is commonly a gone case with persons as to those convictions.

Thus they blind themselves, and keep themselves insensible of their own disease, and so are not terrified with it, nor awakened to use means for relief, till it is past cure.

Thus it is that backsliding commonly comes upon persons that have for some time been under any considerable convictions, and afterwards lose them. Let the consideration of this your danger excite you to the greatest care and diligence to keep your hearts, and to watchfulness and constant prayer against backsliding. And let it put you upon endeavors to strengthen your resolutions of guarding against every thing that tends to the contrary, that you may indeed hold out to the end, for *then shall you know, if you follow on to know the Lord.*

SERMON XIV.*

God Glorified in Man's Dependance.

1. CORINTHIANS i. 29, 30, 31.

THAT NO FLESH SHOULD GLORY IN HIS PRESENCE. BUT OF HIM ARE YE IN CHRIST JESUS, WHO OF GOD IS MADE UNTO US WISDOM, AND RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND SANCTIFICATION, AND REDEMPTION; THAT, ACCORDING AS IT IS WRITTEN, HE THAT GLORIETH, LET HIM GLORY IN THE LORD.

THOSE Christians to whom the apostle directed this epistle, dwelt in a part of the world where human wisdom was in great repute; as the apostle observes in the 22d verse of this chapter. "The Greeks seek after wisdom." Corinth was not far from Athens, that had been for many ages the most famous seat of philosophy and learning in the world.

The apostle therefore observes to them, how that God, by the gospel, destroyed and brought to nought their human wisdom. The learned Grecians, and their great philosophers, by all their wisdom did not know God: They were not able to find out the truth in divine things. But, after they had done their utmost to no effect, it pleased God at length to reveal himself by the gospel, which they accounted foolishness. He "chose the foolish things of the world to confound the

* This was the first piece the author published 1731.

wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and the base things of the world, and things that are despised, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought the things that are." And the apostle informs them why he thus did, in the verse of the text, *That no flesh should glory in his presence, &c.*.....

In which words may be observed,

1. What God aims at in the disposition of things in the affair of redemption, viz. that man should not glory in himself, but alone in God; *That no flesh should glory in his presence,* .....*that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

2. How this end is attained in the work of redemption, viz. by that absolute and immediate dependence which men have upon God in that work, for all their good. Inasmuch as,

First, All the good that they have is in and through Christ; *He is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.* All the good of the fallen and redeemed creature is concerned in these four things, and cannot be better distributed than into them; but Christ is each of them to us, and we have none of them any otherwise than in him. *He is made of God unto us wisdom:* In him are all the proper good and true excellency of the understanding. Wisdom was a thing that the Greeks admired; but Christ is the true light of the world, it is through him alone that true wisdom is imparted to the mind. It is in and by Christ that we have righteousness: It is by being in him that we are justified, have our sins pardoned, and are received as righteous into God's favor. It is by Christ that we have sanctification: We have in him true excellency of heart as well as of understanding; and he is made unto us inherent, as well as imputed righteousness. It is by Christ that we have redemption, or actual deliverance from all misery, and the bestowment of all happiness and glory. Thus we have all our good by Christ, who is God.

SECONDLY. Another instance wherein our dependence on God for all our good appears, is this, That it is God that has given us Christ, that we might have these benefits through him; he, *of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, &c.*

THIRDLY. It is of him that we are in Christ Jesus, and come to have an interest in him, and so do receive those blessings which he is made unto us. It is God that gives us faith whereby we close with Christ.

So that in this verse is shewn our dependence on each person in the Trinity for all our good. We are dependent on Christ the Son of God, as he is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. We are dependent on the Father, who has given us Christ, and made him to be these things to us. We are dependent on the Holy Ghost, for it is *of him that we are in Christ Jesus*; it is the Spirit of God that gives faith in him, whereby we receive him, and close with him.

DOCTRINE.

"God is glorified in the work of redemption in this, that there appears in it so absolute and universal a dependence of the redeemed on him."

Here I propose to shew, 1st. That there is an absolute and universal dependence of the redeemed on God for all their good. And 2dly. That God hereby is exalted and glorified in the work of redemption.

I. There is an absolute and universal dependence of the redeemed on God. The nature and contrivance of our redemption is such, that the redeemed are in every thing directly, immediately, and entirely dependent on God: They are dependent on him for all, and are dependent on him every way.

The several ways wherein the dependence of one being may be upon another for its good, and wherein the redeemed

of Jesus Christ depend on God for all their good, are these, viz. That they have all their good of him, and that they have all through him, and that they have all in him: That he be the cause and original whence all their good comes, therein it is *of* him; and that he be the medium by which it is obtained and conveyed, therein they have it *through* him; and that he be that good itself that is given and conveyed, therein it is *in* him.

Now those that are redeemed by Jesus Christ do, in all these respects, very directly and entirely depend on God for their all.

First, the redeemed have all their good of God; God is the great author of it; He is the first cause of it, and not only so, but he is the only proper cause.

It is of God that we have our Redeemer: It is God that has provided a Saviour for us. Jesus Christ is not only of God in his person, as he is the only begotten Son of God, but he is from God, as we are concerned in him, and in his office of Mediator: He is the gift of God to us: God chose and anointed him, appointed him his work, and sent him into the world.

And as it is God that gives, so it is God that accepts the Saviour. As it is God that provides and gives the Redeemer to buy salvation for us, so it is of God that that salvation is bought: He gives the purchaser, and he affords the thing purchased.

It is of God that Christ becomes ours, that we are brought to him, and are united to him: It is of God that we receive faith to close with him, that we may have an interest in him. Eph. ii. 8. "For by grace ye are saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." It is of God that we actually do receive all the benefits that Christ has purchased. It is God that pardons and justifies, and delivers from going down to hell, and it is his favor that the redeemed are received into, and are made the objects of, when they are justified. So it is God that delivers from the dominion of sin, and cleanses us from our filthiness, and changes us from our deformity. It is of God that the redeemed do receive all their

true excellency, wisdom, and holiness; and that two ways, viz. as the Holy Ghost, by whom these things are immediately wrought, is from God, proceeds from him, and is sent by him; and also as the Holy Ghost himself is God, by whose operation and indwelling, the knowledge of divine things, and a holy disposition, and all grace, are conferred and upheld.

And though means are made use of in conferring grace on men's souls, yet it is of God that we have these means of grace, and it is God that makes them effectual. It is of God that we have the holy scriptures; they are the word of God. It is of God that we have ordinances, and their efficacy depends on the immediate influence of the Spirit of God. The ministers of the gospel are sent of God, and all their sufficiency is of him. 2 Cor. iv. 7. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." Their success depends entirely and absolutely on the immediate blessing and influence of God.

The redeemed have all,

1. Of the grace of God. It was of mere grace that God gave us his only begotten Son. The grace is great in proportion to the dignity and excellency of what is given: The gift was infinitely precious, because it was a person infinitely worthy, a person of infinite glory; and also because it was a person infinitely near and dear to God. The grace is great in proportion to the benefit we have given us in him: The benefit is doubly infinite, in that in him we have deliverance from an infinite, because an eternal misery; and do also receive eternal joy and glory. The grace in bestowing this gift is great in proportion to our unworthiness to whom it is given; instead of deserving such a gift, we merited infinitely ill of God's hands. The grace is great according to the manner of giving, or in proportion to the humiliation and expence of the method and means by which way is made for our having of the gift. He gave him to us dwelling amongst us; he gave him to us incarnate, or in our nature; he gave him to us in our nature, in the like infirmities, in which we have it in our

fallen state, and which in us do accompany, and are occasioned by the sinful corruption of our nature. He gave him to us in a low and afflicted state; and not only so, but he gave him to us slain, that he might be a feast for our souls.

The grace of God in bestowing this gift is most free. It was what God was under no obligation to bestow: He might have rejected fallen man, as he did the fallen angels. It was what we never did any thing to merit: It was given while we were yet enemies, and before we had so much as repented. It was from the love of God that saw no excellency in us to attract it; and it was without expectation of ever being requited for it.

And it is from mere grace that the benefits of Christ are applied to such and such particular persons. Those that are called and sanctified are to attribute it alone to the good pleasure of God's goodness, by which they are *distinguished*. He is sovereign, and hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardens.

Man hath now a greater dependence on the grace of God than he had before the fall. He depends on the free goodness of God for much more than he did then: Then he depended on God's goodness for conferring the reward of perfect obedience: for God was not obliged to promise and bestow that reward: But now we are dependent on the grace of God for much more: We stand in need of grace, not only to bestow glory upon us, but to deliver us from hell and eternal wrath. Under the first covenant we depended on God's goodness to give us the reward of righteousness; and so we do now. And not only so, but we stand in need of God's free and sovereign grace to give us that righteousness; and yet not only so, but we stand in need of his grace to pardon our sin, and release us from the guilt and infinite demerit of it.

And as we are dependent on the goodness of God for more now than under the first covenant, so we are dependent on a much greater, more free and wonderful goodness. We are now more dependent on God's arbitrary and sovereign good pleasure. We were in our first estate dependent on God for

holiness: We had our original righteousness from him; but then holiness was not bestowed in such a way of sovereign good pleasure as it is now. Man was created holy, and it became God to create holy all the reasonable creatures he created: It would have been a disparagement to the holiness of God's nature, if he had made an intelligent creature unholy. But now when a man is made holy, it is from mere and arbitrary grace; God may forever deny holiness to the fallen creature if he pleases, without any disparagement to any of his perfections.

And we are not only indeed more dependent on the grace of God, but our dependence is much more conspicuous, because our own insufficiency and helplessness in ourselves is much more apparent in our fallen and undone state, than it was before we were either sinful, or miserable. We are more apparently dependent on God for holiness, because we are first sinful, and utterly polluted, and afterward holy: So the production of the effect is sensible, and its derivation from God more obvious. If man was ever holy and always was so, it would not be so apparent, that he had not holiness necessarily, as an inseparable qualification of human nature. So we are more apparently dependent on free grace for the favor of God, for we are first justly the objects of his displeasure, and afterwards are received into favor. We are more apparently dependent on God for happiness, being first miserable, and afterwards happy. It is more apparently free and without merit in us, because we are actually without any kind of excellency to merit, if there could be any such thing as merit in creature excellency. And we are not only without any true excellency, but are full of, and wholly defiled with, that which is infinitely odious. All our good is more apparently from God, because we are first naked and wholly without any good, and afterwards enriched with all good.

2. We receive all of the power of God. Man's redemption is often spoke of as a work of wonderful power as well as grace. The great power of God appears in bringing a sinner from his low state, from the depths of sin and misery, to such

an exalted state of holiness and happiness. Eph. i. 19. "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power."

We are dependent on God's power through every step of our redemption. We are dependent on the power of God to convert us, and give faith in Jesus Christ, and the new nature.

It is a work of creation: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." 2 Cor. v. 17. "We are created in Christ Jesus." Eph. ii. 10. The fallen creature cannot attain to true holiness, but by being created again. Eph. iv. 24. "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." It is a raising from the dead. Col. ii. 12, 13. "Wherein ye also are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Yea, it is a more glorious work of power than mere creation, or raising a dead body to life, in that the effect attained is greater and more excellent. That holy and happy being, and spiritual life which is reached in the work of conversion, is a far greater and more glorious effect, than mere being and life. And the state from whence the change is made, of such a death in sin, and total corruption of nature, and depth of misery, is far more remote from the state attained, than mere death or nonentity.

It is by God's power also that we are preserved in a state of grace. 1 Pet. i. 5. "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." As grace is at first from God, so it is continually from him, and is maintained by him, as much as light in the atmosphere is all day long from the sun, as well as at first dawning, or at sunrising.

Men are dependent on the power of God, for every exercise of grace, and for carrying on the work of grace in the heart, for the subduing of sin and corruption, and increasing holy principles, and enabling to bring forth fruit in good works, and at last bringing grace to its perfection, in making the soul completely amiable in Christ's glorious likeness, and filling of it with a satisfying joy and blessedness; and for the raising of the body to life, and to such a perfect state, that it shall be

suitable for an habitation and organ for a soul so perfected and blessed. These are the most glorious effects of the power of God, that are seen in the series of God's acts with respect to the creatures.

Man was dependent on the power of God in his first estate, but he is more dependent on his power now; he needs God's power to do more things for him, and depends on the more wonderful exercise of his power. It was an effect of the power of God to make man holy at the first; but more remarkably so now, because there is a great deal of opposition and difficulty in the way. It is a more glorious effect of power to make that holy that was so depraved, and under the dominion of sin, than to confer holiness on that which before had nothing of the contrary. It is a more glorious work of power to rescue a soul out of the hands of the devil, and from the powers of darkness, and to bring it into a state of salvation, than to confer holiness where there was no prepossession or opposition. Luke xi. 21, 22. "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace; but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils." So it is a more glorious work of power to uphold a soul in a state of grace and holiness, and to carry it on till it is brought to glory, when there is so much sin remaining in the heart resisting, and Satan with all his might opposing, than it would have been to have kept man from falling at first, when Satan had nothing in man.

Thus we have shewn how the redeemed are dependent on God for all their good, as they have all of him.

Secondly. They are also dependent on God for all, as they have all through him. It is God that is the medium of it, as well as the author and fountain of it. All that we have, wisdom, and the pardon of sin, deliverance from hell, acceptance in God's favor, grace and holiness, true comfort and happiness, eternal life and glory, we have from God by a Mediator; and this Mediator is God, which Mediator we have an

absolute dependence upon us he through whom we receive all. So that here is another way wherein we have our dependence on God for all good. God not only gives us the Mediator, and accepts his mediation, and of his power and grace bestows the things purchased by the Mediator, but he is the Mediator.

Our blessings are what we have by purchase; and the purchase is made of God, the blessings are purchased of him, and God gives the purchaser; and not only so, but God is the purchaser. Yea God is both the purchaser and the price; for Christ, who is God, purchased these blessings for us, by offering up himself as the price of our salvation. He purchased eternal life by the sacrifice of himself. Heb. vii. 27. He offered up himself." And ix. 26. "He hath appeared to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Indeed it was the human nature that was offered; but it was the same person with the divine, and therefore was an infinite price; it was looked upon as if God had been offered in sacrifice.

As we thus have our good through God, we have a dependence on God in a respect that man in his first estate had not. Man was to have eternal life then through his own righteousness; so that he had partly a dependence upon what was in himself; for we have a dependence upon that through which we have our good, as well as that from which we have it; and though man's righteousness that he then depended on was indeed from God, yet it was his own, it was inherent in himself; so that his dependence was not so immediately on God. But now the righteousness that we are dependent on is not in ourselves, but in God. We are saved through the righteousness of Christ: He *is made unto us righteousness;* and therefore is prophesied of, Jer. xxiii. 6, under that name, "the Lord our righteousness." In that the righteousness we are justified by is the righteousness of Christ, it is the righteousness of God. 2 Cor. v. 21. "That we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Thus in redemption we have not only all things of God, but by and through him, 1 Cor. viii. 21. "But to us there is

but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."

THIRDLY. The redeemed have all their good in God. We not only have it of him, and through him, but it consists in him; he is all our good.

The good of the redeemed is either objective or inherent. By their objective good, I mean that extrinsic object, in the possession and enjoyment of which they are happy. Their inherent good is that excellency or pleasure which is in the soul itself. With respect to both of which the redeemed have all their good in God, or, which is the same thing, God himself is all their good.

1. The redeemed have all their objective good in God. God himself is the great good which they are brought to the possession and enjoyment of by redemption. He is the highest good, and the sum of all that good which Christ purchased. God is the inheritance of the saints; he is the portion of their souls. God is their wealth and treasure, their food, their life, their dwellingplace, their ornament and diadem, and their everlasting honor and glory. They have none in heaven but God; he is the great good which the redeemed are received to at death, and which they are to rise to at the end of the world. The Lord God, he is the light of the heavenly Jerusalem; and is the "river of the water of life," that runs, and "the tree of life that grows, in the midst of the paradise of God." The glorious excellencies and beauty of God will be what will for ever entertain the minds of the saints, and the love of God will be their everlasting feast. The redeemed will indeed enjoy other things; they will enjoy the angels, and will enjoy one another; but that which they shall enjoy in the angels, or each other, or in any thing else whatsoever that will yield them delight and happiness, will be what will be seen of God in them.

2. The redeemed have all their inherent good in God. Inherent good is twofold; it is either excellency or pleasure.

These the redeemed not only derive from God, as caused by him, but have them in him. They have spiritual excellency and joy by a kind of participation of God. They are made excellent by a communication of God's excellency: God puts his own beauty, i. e. his beautiful likeness, upon their souls: They are made partakers of the divine nature, or moral image of God, 2. Pet. i. 4. They are holy by being made partakers of God's holiness, Heb. xii. 10. The saints are beautiful and blessed by a communication of God's holiness and joy, as the moon and planets are bright by the sun's light. The saint hath spiritual joy and pleasure by a kind of effusion of God on the soul. In these things the redeemed have communion with God; that is, they partake with him and of him.

The saints have both their spiritual excellency and blessedness by the gift of the Holy Ghost, or Spirit of God, and his dwelling in them. They are not only caused by the Holy Ghost, but are in the Holy Ghost as their principle. The Holy Spirit becoming an inhabitant, is a vital principle in the soul: He, acting in, upon, and with the soul, becomes a fountain of true holiness and joy, as a spring is of water, by the exertion and diffusion of itself. John iv. 14. "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Compared with chap. vii. 38, 39. "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; but this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." The sum of what Christ has purchased for us, is that spring of water spoken of in the former of those places, and those rivers of living water spoken of in the latter. And the sum of the blessings, which the redeemed shall receive in heaven, is that river of water of life that proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb. Rev. xxii. 1. Which doubtless signifies the same with those rivers of living water, explained, John vii. 38, 39. which is elsewhere called the "river of God's pleasures:" Herein consists the fulness of good, which the saints receive of Christ. It is by partaking

of the Holy Spirit, that they have communion with Christ in his fulness. God hath given the Spirit, not by measure unto him, and they do receive of his fulness, and grace for grace. This is the sum of the saints' inheritance; and therefore that little of the Holy Ghost which believers have in this world, is said to be the earnest of their inheritance. 2 Cor. i. 22. "Who hath also sealed us, and given us the Spirit in our hearts." And chap. v. 5. "Now he that hath wrought us for the self same thing, is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." And Eph. i. 13, 14. "Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession."

The Holy Spirit and good things are spoken of in Scripture as the same; as if the Spirit of God communicated to the soul, comprised all good things, Matth. vii. 11. "How much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him?" In Luke it is, chap. xi. 13. "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" This is the sum of the blessings that Christ died to procure, and that are the subject of gospel promises. Gal. iii. 13, 14. "He was made a curse for us that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. The Spirit of God is the great promise of the Father, Luke xxiv. 49. "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you." The Spirit of God therefore is called "the Spirit of promise;" Eph. i. 13. This promised thing Christ received, and had given into his hand, as soon as he had finished the work of our redemption, to bestow on all that he had redeemed; Acts ii. 33. "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye both see and hear." So that all the holiness and happiness of the redeemed is in God. It is in the communications, indwelling, and acting of the Spirit of God. Holiness and happiness is in the fruit, here and hereafter, because God dwells in them, and they in God.

Thus it is God that has given us the Redeemer, and it is of him that our good is purchased: So it is God that is the

Redeemer, and the price; and it is God also that is the good purchased. So that all that we have is of God, and through him, and in him, Rom. xi. 36. "For of him, and through him, and to him, or in him, are all things." The same in the Greek that is here rendered *to him*, is rendered *in him*, 1. Cor. vii. 6.

II. God is glorified in the work of redemption by this means, viz. By there being so great and universal a dependence of the redeemed on him.

1. Man hath so much the greater occasion and obligation to take notice and acknowledge God's perfections and all-sufficiency. The greater the creature's dependence is on God's perfections, and the greater concern he has with them, so much the greater occasion has he to take notice of them. So much the greater concern any one has with, and dependence upon, the power and grace of God, so much the greater occasion has he to take notice of that power and grace. So much the greater and more immediate dependence there is on the divine holiness, so much the greater occasion to take notice of, and acknowledge that. So much the greater and more absolute dependence we have on the divine perfections, as belonging to the several persons of the Trinity, so much the greater occasion have we to observe and own the divine glory of each of them. That which we are most concerned with, is surely most in the way of our observation and notice; and this kind of concern with any thing, viz. dependence, does especially tend to command and oblige the attention and observation. Those things that we are not much dependent upon, it is easy to neglect; but we can scarce do any other than mind that which we have a great dependence on. By reason of our so great dependence on God, and his perfections, and in so many respects, he and his glory are the more directly set in our view, which way soever we turn our eyes.

We have the greater occasion to take notice of God's all-sufficiency, when all our sufficiency is thus every way of him. We have the more occasion to contemplate him as an infinite

good, and as the fountain of all good. Such a dependence on God, demonstrates God's allsufficiency. So much as the dependence of the creature is on God, so much the greater does the creature's emptiness in himself appear to be; and so much the greater the creature's emptiness, so much the greater must the fulness of the Being be who supplies him. Our having all of God shews the fulness of his power and grace: Our having all through him shews the fulness of his merit and worthiness; and our having all in him demonstrates his fulness of beauty, love, and happiness.

And the redeemed, by reason of the greatness of their dependence on God, have not only so much the greater occasion, but obligation to contemplate and acknowledge the glory and fulness of God. How unreasonable and ungrateful should we be if we did not acknowledge that sufficiency and glory that we do absolutely, immediately, and universally depend upon?

2. Hereby is demonstrated how great God's glory is considered comparatively, or as compared with the creature's. By the creature's being thus wholly and universally dependent on God, it appears that the creature is nothing, and that God is all. Hereby it appears that God is infinitely above us; that God's strength, and wisdom, and holiness, are infinitely greater than ours. However great and glorious the creature apprehends God to be, yet if he be not sensible of the difference between God and him, so as to see that God's glory is great, compared with his own, he will not be disposed to give God the glory due to his name. If the creature, in any respect, sets himself upon a level with God, or exalts himself to any competition with him, however he may apprehend that great honor and profound respect may belong to God from those that are more inferior, and at a greater distance, he will not be so sensible of its being due from him. So much the more men exalt themselves, so much the less will they surely be disposed to exalt God. It is certainly a thing that God aims at in the disposition of things in the affair of redemption, (if we allow the Scriptures to be a revelation of Gods mind) that God should appear all, and man nothing. It is God's declar-

ed design that others should not "glory in his presence;" which implies that it is his design to advance his own comparative glory. So much the more man "glories in God's presence," so much the less glory is ascribed to God.

3. By its being thus ordered, that the creature should have so absolute and universal a dependence on God, provision is made that God should have our whole souls, and should be the object of our undivided respect. If we had our dependence partly on God, and partly on something else, man's respect would be divided to those different things on which he had dependence. Thus it would be if we depended on God only for a part of our good, and on ourselves, or some other being for another part: Or if we had our good only from God, and through another that was not God, and in something else distinct from both, our hearts would be divided between the good itself, and him from whom, and him through whom we received it. But now there is no occasion for this, God being not only he from or of whom we have all good, but also through whom and one that is that good itself, that we have from him and through him. So that whatsoever there is to attract our respect, the tendency is still directly towards God, all unites in him as the centre.

USE.

1. We may here observe the marvellous wisdom of God, in the work of redemption. God hath made man's emptiness and misery, his low, lost and ruined state into which he sunk by the fall, an occasion of the greater advancement of his own glory, as in other ways, so particularly in this, that there is now a much more universal and apparent dependence of man on God. Though God be pleased to lift man out of that dismal abyss of sin and woe into which he was fallen, and exceedingly to exalt him in excellency and honor, and to an high pitch of glory and blessedness, yet the creature hath nothing in any respect to glory of; all the glory evidently belongs to God, all is in a mere, and most absolute, and divine dependence on the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

And each person of the Trinity is equally glorified in this work: There is an absolute dependence of the creature on every one for all: All is of the Father, all through the Son, and all in the Holy Ghost. Thus God appears in the work of redemption as all in all. It is fit that he that is, and there is none else should be the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the all, and the only, in this work.

2. Hence those doctrines and schemes of divinity that are in any respect opposite to such an absolute and universal dependence on God, do derogate from God's glory, and thwart the design of the contrivance for our redemption. Those schemes that put the creature in God's stead, in any of the forementioned respects, that exalt man into the place of either Father, Son or Holy Ghost, in any thing pertaining to our redemption; that, however they may allow of a dependence of the redeemed on God, yet deny a dependence that is so absolute and universal; that own an entire dependence on God for some things, but not for others; that own that we depend on God for the gift and acceptance of a Redeemer, but deny so absolute a dependence on him for the obtaining of an interest in the Redeemer; that own an absolute dependence on the Father for giving his Son, and on the Son for working out redemption, but not so entire a dependence on the Holy Ghost for conversion, and a being in Christ, and so coming to a title to his benefits; that own a dependence on God for means of grace, but not absolutely for the benefit and success of those means; that own a partial dependence on the power of God, for the obtaining and exercising holiness, but not a mere dependence on the arbitrary and sovereign grace of God; that own a dependence on the free grace of God for a reception into his favor, so far that it is without any proper merit, but not as it is without being attracted, or moved with any excellency; that own a partial dependence on Christ, as he through whom we have life, as having purchased new terms of life, but still hold that the righteousness through which we have life is inherent in ourselves, as it was under the first covenant; and whatever other way any scheme is inconsistent with our entire

dependence on God for all, and in each of those ways, of having all of him, through him, and in him, it is repugnant to the design and tenor of the gospel, and robs it of that which God accounts its lustre and glory.

3. Hence we may learn a reason why faith is that by which we come to have an interest in this redemption; for there is included in the nature of faith, a sensibleness and acknowledgment of this absolute dependence on God in this affair. It is very fit that it should be required of all, in order to their having the benefit of this redemption, that they should be sensible of, and acknowledge their dependence on God for it. It is by this means that God hath contrived to glorify himself in redemption; and it is fit that God should at least have this glory of those that are the subjects of this redemption, and have the benefit of it.

Faith is a sensibleness of what is real in the work of redemption; and as we do really wholly depend on God, so the soul that believes doth entirely depend on God for all salvation, in its own sense and act. Faith abases men, and exalts God, it gives all the glory of redemption to God alone. It is necessary in order to saving faith, that man should be emptied of himself, that he should be sensible that he is "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Humility is a great ingredient of true faith: He that truly receives redemption, receives it as a little child. Mark x. 15. "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, he shall not enter therein." It is the delight of a believing soul to abase itself and exalt God alone: That is the language of it. Psalm cxv. 1. Not unto us, "O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory."

4. Let us be exhorted to exalt God alone, and ascribe to him all the glory of redemption. Let us endeavor to obtain, and increase in a sensibleness of our great dependence on God, to have our eye to him alone, to mortify a selfdependent, and selfrighteous disposition. Man is naturally exceeding prone to be exalting himself and depending on his own power or goodness, as though he were he from whom he must

expect happiness, and to have respect to enjoyments alien from God and his Spirit, as those in which happiness is to be found.

And this doctrine should teach us to exalt God alone, as by trust and reliance, so by praise. *Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord.* Hath any man hope that he is converted, and sanctified, and that his mind is endowed with true excellency and spiritual beauty, and his sins forgiven, and he received into God's favor, and exalted to the honor and blessedness of being his child, and an heir of eternal life; let him give God all the glory; who alone makes him to differ from the worst of men in this world, or the miserablest of the damned in hell. Hath any man much comfort and strong hope of eternal life, let not his hope lift him up, but dispose him the more to abase himself, and reflect on his own exceeding unworthiness of such a favor, and to exalt God alone. Is any man eminent in holiness, and abundant in good works, let him take nothing of the glory of it to himself, but ascribe it to him whose "workmanship we are, created in Christ Jesus unto good works."

SERMON XV.*

Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.

DEUTERONOMY xxxii. 35.

.....THEIR FOOT SHALL SLIDE IN DUE TIME.....

IN this verse is threatened the vengeance of God on the wicked unbelieving Israelites, that were God's visible people, and lived under means of grace; and that notwithstanding all God's wonderful works that he had wrought towards that people, yet remained, as is expressed verse 28, void of counsel, having no understanding in them; and that, under all the cultivations of heaven, brought forth bitter and poisonous fruit; as in the two verses next preceding the text.

The expression that I have chosen for my text, *Their foot shall slide in due time*, seems to imply the following things relating to the punishment and destruction that these wicked Israelites were exposed to.

1. That they were always exposed to destruction; as one that stands or walks in slippery places is always exposed to fall. This is implied in the manner of their destruction's coming upon them, being represented by their foot's sliding.

* Preached at Enfield, July 8, 1741, at a time of great awakenings; and attended with remarkable impressions on many of the hearers.

The same is expressed, Psalm lxxiii. 18 "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction."

2. It implies, that they were always exposed to sudden unexpected destruction. As he that walks in slippery places is every moment liable to fall, he cannot foresee one moment whether he shall stand or fall the next; and when he does fall, he falls at once without warning: Which is also expressed in that Psalm lxxiii. 18, 19. "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction: How are they brought into desolation as in a moment?

3. Another thing implied is, that they are liable to fall of themselves, without being thrown down by the hand of another; as he that stands or walks on slippery ground needs nothing but his own weight to throw him down.

4. That the reason why they are not fallen already, and do not fall now, is only that God's appointed time is not come. For it is said, that when that due time, or appointed time comes, *their foot shall slide*. Then they shall be left to fall, as they are inclined by their own weight. God will not hold them up in these slippery places any longer, but will let them go; and then, at that very instant, they shall fall into destruction; as he that stands in such slippery declining ground on the edge of a pit that he cannot stand alone, when he is let go he immediately falls and is lost.

The observation from the words that I would now insist upon is this,

"There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God."

By the mere pleasure of God, I mean his sovereign pleasure, his arbitrary will, restrained by no obligation, hindered by no manner of difficulty, any more than if nothing else but God's mere will had in the least degree or in any respect whatsoever, any hand in the preservation of wicked men one moment.

The truth of this observation may appear by the following considerations.

1. There is no want of power in God to cast wicked men into hell at any moment. Men's hands cannot be strong when God rises up: The strongest have no power to resist him, nor can any deliver out of his hands.

He is not only able to cast wicked men into hell, but he can most easily do it. Sometimes an earthly prince meets with a great deal of difficulty to subdue a rebel, that has found means to fortify himself, and has made himself strong by the numbers of his followers. But it is not so with God. There is no fortress that is any defence from the power of God. Though hand join in hand, and vast multitudes of God's enemies combine and associate themselves, they are easily broken in pieces: They are as great heaps of light chaff before the whirlwind; or lage quantities of dry stubble before devouring flames. We find it easy to tread on and crush a worm that we see crawling on the earth; so it is easy for us to cut or singe a slender thread that any thing hangs by; thus easy is it for God, when he pleases, to cast his enemies down to hell. What are we, that we should think to stand before him, at whose rebuke the earth trembles, and before whom the rocks are thrown down?

2. They deserve to be cast into hell; so that divine justice never stands in the way, it makes no objection against God's using his power at any moment to destroy them. Yea, on the contrary, justice calls aloud for an infinite punishment of their sins. Divine justice says of the tree that brings forth such grapes of Sodom, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" Luke xiii. 7. The sword of divine justice is every moment brandished over their heads, and it is nothing but the hand of arbitrary mercy, and God's mere will, that holds it back.

3. They are already under a sentence of condemnation to hell. They do not only justly deserve to be cast down thither, but the sentence of the law of God, that eternal and immutable rule of righteousness that God has fixed between him and mankind, is gone out against them, and stands against them; so that they are bound over already to hell. John iii. 18.

"He that believeth not is condemned already." So that every unconverted man properly belongs to hell; that is his place; from thence he is. John viii. 23. "Ye are from beneath:" And thither he is bound; it is the place that justice, and God's word, and the sentence of his unchangeable law, assign to him.

4. They are now the objects of that very same anger and wrath of God, that is expressed in the torments of hell: And the reason why they do not go down to hell at each moment, is not because God, in whose power they are, is not then very angry with them; as angry, as he is with many of those miserable creatures that he is now tormenting in hell, and do there feel and bear the fierceness of his wrath. Yea, God is a great deal more angry with great numbers that are now on earth; yea, doubtless, with many that are now in this congregation, that, it may be, are at ease and quiet, than he is with many of those that are now in the flames of hell.

So that it is not because God is unmindful of their wickedness, and does not resent it, that he does not let loose his hand and cut them off. God is not altogether such an one as themselves, though they may imagine him to be so. The wrath of God burns against them; their damnation does not slumber; the pit is prepared; the fire is made ready; the furnace is now hot; ready to receive them; the flames do now rage and glow. The glittering sword is whet, and held over them, and the pit hath opened her mouth under them.

5. The devil stands ready to fall upon them, and seize them as his own, at what moment God shall permit him. They belong to him; he has their souls in his possession, and under his dominion. The scripture represents them as his goods, Luke xi. 21. The devils watch them; they are ever by them, at their right hand; they stand waiting for them, like greedy, hungry lions that see their prey, and expect to have it, but are for the present kept back; if God should withdraw his hand by which they are restrained, they would in one moment fly upon their poor souls. The old serpent is gaping for them; hell opens its mouth wide to receive them;

and if God should permit it, they would be hastily swallowed up and lost.

6. There are in the souls of wicked men those hellish principles reigning, that would presently kindle and flame out into hell fire, if it were not for God's restraints. There is laid in the very nature of carnal men, a foundation for the torments of hell: There are those corrupt principles, in reigning power in them, and in full possession of them, that are the beginnings of hell fire. These principles are active and powerful, exceeding violent in their nature, and if it were not for the restraining hand of God upon them, they would soon break out, they would flame out after the same manner as the same corruptions, the same enmity does in the hearts of damned souls, and would beget the same torments in them as they do in them. The souls of the wicked are in scripture compared to the troubled sea, Isaiah lvii. 20. For the present God restrains their wickedness by his mighty power, as he does the raging waves of the troubled sea, saying, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further;" but if God should withdraw that restraining power, it would soon carry all before it. Sin is the ruin and misery of the soul; it is destructive in its nature; and if God should leave it without restraint, there would need nothing else to make the soul perfectly miserable. The corruption of the heart of man is a thing that is immoderate and boundless in its fury; and while wicked men live here, it is like fire pent up by God's restraints, whereas if it were let loose, it would set on fire the course of nature; and as the heart is now a sink of sin, so, if sin was not restrained, it would immediately turn the soul into a fiery oven, or a furnace of fire and brimstone.

7. It is no security to wicked men for one moment, that there are no visible means of death at hand. It is no security to a natural man, that he is now in health, and that he does not see which way he should now immediately go out of the world by any accident, and that there is no visible danger in any respect in his circumstances. The manifold and continual experience of the world in all ages, shews that this is no

evidence that a man is not on the very brink of eternity, and that the next step will not be into another world. The unseen, unthought of ways and means of persons' going suddenly out of the world are innumerable and inconceivable. Unconverted men walk over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that they will not bear their weight, and these places are not seen. The arrows of death fly unseen at noonday; the sharpest sight cannot discern them. God has so many different, unsearchable ways of taking wicked men out of the world and sending them to hell, that there is nothing to make it appear, that God had need to be at the expense of a miracle, or go out of the ordinary course of his providence, to destroy any wicked man, at any moment. All the means that there are of sinners' going out of the world, are so in God's hands, and so absolutely subject to his power and determination, that it does not depend at all less on the mere will of God, whether sinners shall at any moment go to hell, than if means were never made use of, or at all concerned in the case.

8. Natural men's prudence and care to preserve their own lives, or the care of others to preserve them, do not secure them a moment. This, divine providence and universal experience do also bear testimony to. There is this clear evidence that men's own wisdom is no security to them from death; that if it were otherwise we should see some difference between the wise and politic men of the world, and others, with regard to their liableness to early and unexpected death; but how is it in fact? Eccles. ii. 16. "How dieth the wise man? As the fool."

9. All wicked men's pains and contrivance they use to escape hell, while they continue to reject Christ, and so remain wicked men, do not secure them from hell one moment. Almost every natural man that hears of hell, flatters himself that he shall escape it; he depends upon himself for his own security; he flatters himself in what he has done, in what he is now doing, or what he intends to do; every one lays out matters in his own mind how he shall avoid damnation, and flat-

ters himself that he contrives well for himself, and that his schemes will not fail. They hear indeed that there are but few saved, and that the bigger part of men that have died heretofore are gone to hell; but each one imagines that he lays out matters better for his own escape than others have done: He does not intend to come to that place of torment; he says within himself, that he intends to take care that shall be effectual, and to order matters so for himself as not to fail.

But the foolish children of men do miserably delude themselves in their own schemes, and in their confidence in their own strength and wisdom, they trust to nothing but a shadow. The bigger part of those that heretofore have lived under the same means of grace, and are now dead, are undoubtedly gone to hell; and it was not because they were not as wise as those that are now alive; it was not because they did not lay out matters as well for themselves to secure their own escape. If it were so that we could come to speak with them, and could enquire of them, one by one, whether they expected, when alive, and when they used to hear about hell, ever to be subjects of that misery, we, doubtless, should hear one and another reply, "No, I never intended to come here: I had laid out matters otherwise in my mind; I thought I should contrive well for myself: I thought my scheme good: I intended to take effectual care; but it came upon me unexpectedly; I did not look for it at that time, and in that manner; it came as a thief: Death outwitted me: God's wrath was too quick for me: O my cursed foolishness! I was flattering myself, and pleasing myself with vain dreams of what I would do hereafter; and when I was saying peace and safety, then sudden destruction came upon me."

10. God has laid himself under no obligation, by any promise, to keep any natural man out of hell one moment: God certainly has made no promises either of eternal life, or of any deliverance or preservation from eternal death, but what are contained in the covenant of grace, the promises that are given in Christ, in whom all the promises are yea and amen. But surely they have no interest in the promises of the cove-

nant of grace that are not the children of the covenant, and that do not believe in any of the promises of the covenant, and have no interest in the Mediator of the covenant.

So that, whatever some have imagined and pretended about promises made to natural mens' earnest seeking and knocking, it is plain and manifest, that whatever pains a natural man takes in religion, whatever prayers he makes, till he believes in Christ, God is under no manner of obligation to keep him a moment from eternal destruction.

So that thus it is, that natural men are held in the hand of God over the pit of hell; they have deserved the fiery pit, and are already sentenced to it; and God is dreadfully provoked, his anger is as great towards them as to those that are actually suffering the executions of the fierceness of his wrath in hell, and they have done nothing in the least, to appease or abate that anger, neither is God in the least bound by any promise to hold them up one moment; the devil is waiting for them, hell is gaping for them, the flames gather and flash about them, and would fain lay hold on them and swallow them up; the fire pent up in their own hearts is struggling to break out; and they have no interest in any Mediator, there are no means within reach that can be any security to them. In short, they have no refuge, nothing to take hold of; all that preserves them every moment is the mere arbitrary will, and uncovenanted, unobliged forbearance of an incensed God.

APPLICATION.

The use may be of awakening to unconverted persons in this congregation. This that you have heard is the case of every one of you that are out of Christ. That world of misery, that lake of burning brimstone, is extended abroad under you. There is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God; there is hell's wide gaping mouth open; and you have nothing to stand upon, nor any thing to take hold of: There is nothing between you and hell but the air; it is only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up.

You probably are not sensible of this; you find you are kept out of hell, but do not see the hand of God in it; but look at other things, as the good state of your bodily constitution, your care of your own life, and the means you use for your own preservation. But indeed these things are nothing; if God should withdraw his hand, they would avail no more to keep you from falling, than the thin air to hold up a person that is suspended in it.

Your wickedness makes you as it were heavy as lead, and to tend downwards with great weight and pressure towards hell; and if God should let you go, you would immediately sink and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless gulf, and your healthy constitution, and your own care and prudence, and best contrivance, and all your righteousness, would have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell, than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock. Were it not that so is the sovereign pleasure of God, the earth would not bear you one moment; for you are a burden to it; the creation groans with you; the creature is made subject to the bondage of your corruption, not willingly; the sun does not willingly shine upon you to give you light to serve sin and Satan; the earth does not willingly yield her increase to satisfy your lusts; nor is it willingly a stage for your wickedness to be acted upon; the air does not willingly serve you for breath to maintain the flame of life in your vitals, while you spend your life in the service of God's enemies. God's creatures are good, and were made for men to serve God with, and do not willingly subserve to any other purpose, and groan when they are abused to purposes so directly contrary to their nature and end. And the world would spew you out, were it not for the sovereign hand of him who hath subjected it in hope. There are the black clouds of God's wrath now hanging directly over your heads, full of the dreadful storm, and big with thunder; and were it not for the restraining hand of God, it would immediately burst forth upon you. The sovereign pleasure of God, for the present, stays his rough wind; otherwise it would come with fury, and your destruction

would come like a whirlwind, and you would be like the chaff of the summer threshing floor.

The wrath of God is like great waters that are dammed for the present; they increase more and more, and rise higher and higher, till an outlet is given; and the longer the stream is stopped, the more rapid and mighty is its course, when once it is let loose. It is true, that judgment against your evil work has not been executed hitherto; the floods of God's vengeance have been withheld; but your guilt in the mean time is constantly increasing, and you are every day treasuring up more wrath; the waters are continually rising, and waxing more and more mighty; and there is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, that holds the waters back, that are unwilling to be stopped, and press hard to go forward. If God should only withdraw his hand from the flood gate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God, would rush forth with inconceivable fury, and would come upon you with omnipotent power; and if your strength were ten thousand times greater than it is, yea, ten thousand times greater than the strength of the stoutest, sturdiest devil in hell, it would be nothing to withstand or endure it.

The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood.

Thus are all you that never passed under a great change of heart, by the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon your souls; all that were never born again, and made new creatures, and raised from being dead in sin, to a state of new, and before altogether unexperienced light and life, (however you may have reformed your life in many things, and may have had religious affections, and may keep up a form of religion in your families and closets, and in the houses of God, and may be strict in it) you are thus in the hands of an angry God;

it is nothing but his mere pleasure that keeps you from being this moment swallowed up in everlasting destruction.

However unconvinced you may now be of the truth of what you hear, by and by you will be fully convinced of it. Those that are gone from being in the like circumstances with you, see that it was so with them; for destruction came suddenly upon most of them; when they expected nothing of it, and while they were saying, Peace and safety: Now they see, that those things that they depended on for peace and safety were nothing but thin air and empty shadows.

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect, over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times so abominable in his eyes, as the most hateful and venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince: And yet, it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment: It is to be ascribed to nothing else, that you did not go to hell the last night; that you was suffered to awake again in this world, after you closed your eyes to sleep: And there is no other reason to be given, why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning, but that God's hand has held you up: There is no other reason to be given why you have not gone to hell, since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful wicked manner of attending his solemn worship: Yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you do not this very moment drop down into hell.

O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in: It is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you as against many of the damned in hell: You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it,

and ready every moment to singe it, and burn it asunder; and you have no interest in any Meditator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment.

And consider here more particularly several things concerning that wrath that you are in such danger of.

1. Whose wrath it is. It is the wrath of the infinite God. If it were only the wrath of man, though it were of the most potent prince, it would be comparatively little to be regarded. The wrath of kings is very much dreaded, especially of absolute monarchs, that have the possessions and lives of their subjects wholly in their power, to be disposed of at their mere will. Prov. xx. 2. "The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: Whoso provoketh him to anger, sinneth against his own soul." The subject that very much enrages an arbitrary prince, is liable to suffer the most extreme torments that human art can invent, or human power can inflict. But the greatest earthly potentates, in their greatest majesty and strength, and when cloathed in their greatest terrors, are but feeble, despicable worms of the dust, in comparison of the great and almighty Creator and King of heaven and earth: It is but little that they can do, when most enraged, and when they have exerted the utmost of their fury. All the kings of the earth before God, are as grasshoppers; they are nothing, and less than nothing: Both their love and their hatred is to be despised. The wrath of the great King of kings, is as much more terrible than theirs, as his majesty is greater. Luke xii. 4, 5. "And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."

2. It is the fierceness of his wrath that you are exposed to. We often read of the fury of God; as in Isaiah lix. 17. "According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay fury to his

adversaries." So Isaiah lxvi. 15. "For behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury and his rebuke with flames of fire." And so in many other places. So we read of God's fierceness. Rev. xix. 15. There we read of "the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." The words are exceedingly terrible: If it had only been said, "the wrath of God," the words would have implied that which is infinitely dreadful: But it is not only said so, but "the fierceness and wrath of God:" The fury of God! the fierceness of Jehovah! Oh how dreadful must that be! Who can utter or conceive what such expressions carry in them! But it is not only said so, but "the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." As though there would be a very great manifestation of his almighty power in what the fierceness of his wrath should inflict, as though omnipotence should be as it were enraged, and exerted, as men were wont to exert their strength in the fierceness of their wrath. Oh! then, What will be the consequence! What will become of the poor worm that shall suffer it! Whose hands can be strong! And whose heart endure! To what a dreadful, inexpressible, inconceivable depth of misery must the poor creature be sunk who shall be the subject of this!

Consider this, you that are here present, that yet remain in an unregenerate state. That God will execute the fierceness of his anger, implies, that he will inflict wrath without any pity: When God beholds the ineffable extremity of your case, and sees your torment to be so vastly disproportioned to your strength, and sees how your poor soul is crushed, and sinks down, as it were, into an infinite gloom; he will have no compassion upon you, he will not forbear the executions of his wrath, or in the least lighten his hand; there shall be no moderation or mercy, nor will God then at all stay his rough wind; he will have no regard to your welfare, nor be at all careful lest you should suffer too much in any other sense, than only that you shall not suffer beyond what strict justice requires: Nothing shall be withheld, because it is so hard for you to bear. Ezek. viii. 18. "Therefore will I also deal in

fury; mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity; and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them." Now God stands ready to pity you; this is a day of mercy; you may cry now with some encouragement of obtaining mercy: But when once the day of mercy is past, your most lamentable and dolorous cries and shrieks will be in vain; you will be wholly lost and thrown away of God, as to any regard to your welfare; God will have no other use to put you to, but only to suffer misery; you shall be continued in being to no other end; for you will be a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction; and there will be no other use of this vessel, but only to be filled full of wrath: God will be so far from pitying you when you cry to him, that it is said he will only "laugh and mock," Prov. i. 25, 26, &c.

How awful are those words, Isaiah lxiii. 3, which are the words of the great God. "I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment." It is perhaps impossible to conceive of words that carry in them greater manifestations of these three things, viz. contempt and hatred, and fierceness of indignation. If you cry to God to pity you, he will be so far from pitying you in your doleful case, or shewing you the least regard or favor, that instead of that, he will only tread you under foot: And though he will know that you cannot bear the weight of omnipotence treading upon you, yet he will not regard that, but he will crush you under his feet without mercy; he will crush out your blood, and make it fly, and it shall be sprinkled on his garments, so as to stain all his raiment. He will not only hate you, but he will have you in the utmost contempt; no place shall be thought fit for you, but under his feet to be trodden down as the mire of the streets.

3. The misery you are exposed to is that which God will inflict to that end, that he might shew what that wrath of Jehovah is. God hath had it on his heart to shew to angels and men, both how excellent his love is, and also how terrible his wrath is. Sometimes earthly kings have a mind to shew how

terrible their wrath is, by the extreme punishments they would execute on those that provoke them. Nebuchadnezzar, that mighty and haughty monarch of the Chaldean empire, was willing to shew his wrath when enraged with Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego; and accordingly gave order that the burning fiery furnace should be heated seven times hotter than it was before; doubtless, it was raised to the utmost degree of fierceness that human art could raise it; but the great God is also willing to shew his wrath, and magnify his awful Majesty and mighty power in the extreme sufferings of his enemies. Rom. ix. 22. "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" And seeing this is his design, and what he has determined, to shew how terrible the unmixed, unrestrained wrath, the fury, and fierceness of Jehovah is, he will do it to effect. There will be something accomplished and brought to pass that will be dreadful with a witness. When the great and angry God hath risen up and executed his awful vengeance on the poor sinner, and the wretch is actually suffering th infinite weight and power of his indignation then will God call upon the whole universe to behold that awful majesty and mighty power that is to be seen in it. Isa. xxxiii. 12, 13, 14. "And the people shall be as the burnings of lime, as thorns cut up shall they be burnt in the fire. Hear ye that are far off, what I have done; and ye that are near, acknowledge my might. The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites," &c.

Thus it will be with you that are in an unconverted state, if you continue in it; the infinite might, and Majesty, and terribleness, of the Omnipotent God shall be magnified upon you, in the ineffable strength of your torments: You shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and when you shall be in this state of suffering, the glorious inhabitants of heaven shall go forth and look on the awful spectacle, that they may see what the wrath and fierceness of the Almighty is; and when they have

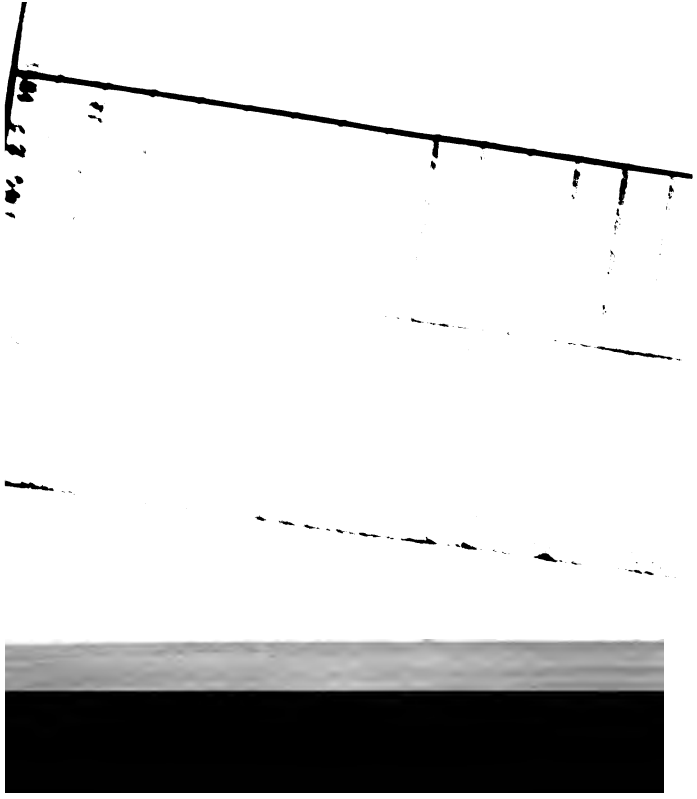
seen it, they will fall down and adore that great power and majesty. Isa. lxvi. 23, 24. "And it shall come to pass, that from one moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

4. It is everlasting wrath. It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God one moment; but you must suffer it to all eternity: There will be no end to this exquisite, horrible misery: When you look forward, you shall see a long forever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts, and amaze your soul; and you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all; you will know certainly that you must wear out long ages, millions of millions of ages, in wrestling and conflicting with this Almighty merciless vengeance; and then when you have so done, when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this manner, you will know that all is but a point to what remains. So that your punishment will indeed be infinite. Oh, who can express what the state of a soul in such circumstances is! All that we can possibly say about it, gives but a very feeble, faint representation of it; it is inexpressible and inconceivable: For "who knows the power of God's anger?"

How dreadful is the state of those that are daily and hourly in danger of this great wrath and infinite misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation that has not been born again, however moral and strict, sober and religious, they may otherwise be. Oh that you would consider it, whether you be young or old! There is reason to think, that there are many in this congregation now hearing this discourse, that will actually be the subjects of this very misery to all eternity. We know not who they are, or in what seats they sit, or what thoughts they now have. It may be they are now at ease, and hear all these things without much dis-

turbance, and are now flattering themselves that they are not the persons; promising themselves that they shall escape. If we knew that there was one person, and but one, in the whole congregation, that was to be the subject of this misery, what an awful thing would it be to think of! If we knew who it was, what an awful sight would it be to see such a person! How might all the rest of the congregation lift up a lamentable and bitter cry over him! But alas! Instead of one, how many is it likely will remember this discourse in hell? And it would be a wonder, if some that are now present should not be in hell in a very short time, before this year is out. And it would be no wonder if some persons, that now sit here in some seats of this meetinghouse in health, and quiet and secure, should be there before tomorrow morning.

END OF THE SEVENTH VOLUME.



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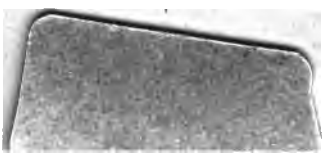
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